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THE INFLUENCES OF QUAKERISM ON AMERICAN LITERATURE PRIOR TO 1900

By

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PRIOR TO 1900

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FOREWORD

The writer of this paper has for many years been interested in the little known and little understood group of Quakers who silently pursued their course in the face of attack and ridicule. Stories of these people, who seemed to have inspired awe and aroused curiosity because of their dress, speech, and dogged persistence in their own convictions, have always fascinated the writer. From early childhood she has heard from parents and relatives, who had had very close associations with Quakers, stories of these benevolent, silent, yet bold Friends. The story of a sober Friend who reminded his wife that, "All the world art queer, my dear, except me and thee and thou art a little queer at times," always brought forth pleasure. Often has she heard of brutal attacks on these people, or of some clever trick played by them on fugitive slave hunters.

What a peculiar sect they seemed to be when considered by the layman ! How utterly unattached they seemed to the problems of secular life! How unmindful of the political, territorial and social development of America they seemed! Yet upon a more careful study one will find that the Quakers were alive to growing America and were associated with every phase of life ranging from religion to commerce. The Quaker character became proverbial for probity and it would be difficult to find any movement that promised on right lines to benefit man that had not received support from Friends to an extent out of all proportion to their numbers. In the field of Literature one might say that the whole Transcendental Movement found fruitful response because of the Quaker contribution to American ideology.

BEGINNING OF QUAKERISM IN EUROPE

Chapter I

GEORGE FOX:

Quakerism like practically all American institutions had its beginning in Europe. The Quakers constituted one of the numerous religious groups which arose in England in the seventeenth century. It was a fatal mistake of Parliament to abolish one form of religious institution before agreeing upon another to take its place; for in the interregnum the dissenters increased to such an extent that no uniformity could ever again be attained. Quakerism found opportunity to develop under these conditions.

Its founder, George Fox, son of a weaver of Leicester, was born in 1624 and at an early age began to have serious mental uneasiness brought on by religious doubts. At the age of nineteen he became so distracted that he hastened to London to seek aid from Baptist ministers. They were unable to satisfy his uneasiness and in his quest for some fortress of hope, he joined practically every religious movement in London. He says:

> ".....About the year 1646, as I was going to Coventry and entering toward the gate a consideration arose in me how it was said that all Christians are believers, both Protestants and Baptists. And the Lord opened to me that if all were believers then were they all born of God and passed from death to life, and that none were true believers but such, and though others said they were believers yet they were

> not. Another time, as I was walking in a field on First day morning, the Lord opened to me that being bred at Oxford or Cambridge was not enough to fit and qualify men to be ministers of Christ and I stranged at it because it was the common belief of people." [1]

This mental and spiritual unrest continued even though Fox felt satisfied that education was not the essential qualification of a minister. At last he heard a voice which said:

> "There is one, Even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition and when I heard it my heart did leap for joy. I saw an ocean of darkness and death, but an infinite ocean of light and love which flowed over the ocean of darkness. Now was I come up in spirit through the flaming sword into the Paradise of God. All things were new and all creation gave another smell unto me beyond what words can utter." [2]

Upon this revelation he heard the voice of Christ and founded the Quaker faith. Fox soon gathered a band of those who felt they were called to preach and exhort. He had no special ordination for there was no church organization; but by 1654 there were sixty ministers traveling up and down the countryside preaching.

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[1] George Fox -- Journal, pp. 3-6

[2] Ibid, pp. 13-17

PERSECUTIONS OF QUAKERS IN ENGLAND:

The Corporation Act of 1661 prepared the way for uniformity, for by this means the qualification for all officers was made to depend upon membership in the Episcopal Church. The "Book of Sports," a book encouraging sports on Sunday led to persecutions of those who held Sunday sacred. Because of their sober life, Quakers were suspected of plotting against Conformity. The strictest persecutions were practiced; Quakers were brutally whipped, hundreds were cast into prison and their property was confiscated. They were denied the privilege of attending the universities because of their non-conformity to the established church. Even the plays of the time satirized the solemn Quaker. The attitude of playwrights toward Quakers varied from simply humorous to down right vile. Quakers were painted as Kill-joys by the stage as seen in "The Recruiting Officer" (Act I, Sc. 1). Worthy is melancholy, but Plume is happy. This bit of conversation shows in what contempt Quakers were held:

Worthy: Thou art a happy fellow; once I was so.

Plume: What ails thee, man? Has your father rose from the dead and reassumed his estate?

Worthy: No.

Plume: Then you are marry'd, surely.

Worthy: No.

Plume: Then you are mad, or <u>turning Quaker</u>. [1]

Another rather scurrilous play is "A City Ramble" by Charles Knipe. The scene is laid in a night court in London where all types of London have

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[1] Ezra Maxfield -- <u>Quakers in English Stage Plays</u>, pp. 261-2
Modern Language Association of America

have been crowded and the high brought low, dignity degraded by the strong arm of the law. There is a country justice, a Jew, a Quaker, a Presbyterian parson, all charged with drunkenness and adultery. The Quaker is made especially prominent when his wife, Rachel, comes in person to plead her husband's cause, we have the spectacle of two canting rogues, both bombastic hypocrites, in Quaker garments. [1]

The playwrights make most game of the Quaker's most obvious peculiarities as "Inner light," stubborn hat, refusal to swear, non-resistance, single-price bargaining and women's green aprons.

To some extent the Quakers brought persecutions on themselves for they lampooned Catholics, Puritans, Baptists or any one out of favor; often the language they used was indecent. The Quakers also brought severe penalties on themselves by their refusal to remove their hats in the presence of magistrates because it would recognize one man as superior to others when indeed they considered all men equal; by their refusal to pay tithes; and by the use of the pronouns "thou" and "thee" to express their superiority to others. Under the last Stuarts at least twelve thousand Quakers were imprisoned.

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[1] Ezra Maxfield -- Quakers in English Stage Plays, p. 267
Modern Language Association of America

A DEFINITION OF QUAKERISM

Chapter II

PROBABLE SOURCE OF NAME:

Fox had an engaging appearance and a persuasive manner and as a result of this he soon influenced many Protestants to be converted to the faith of "Inner Light." Regular meetings were held in 1652 in Lancashire while Fox took up residence in Swathmore Hall, the estate of Judge Fell; from there he sent out traveling ministers.

Fox was often imprisoned for denouncing false ministers. The name Quaker was given presumably by Fox who said Judge Bennet in Derby called him by this name in 1650, because Fox summoned him to tremble (Quake--German) before the word of God. In the great Oxford English Dictionary under the "Quaker," occurs the following extract and comment:

> "I hear of a sect of woman (they are at Southworke) come from beyond the sea, called Quakers, and these swell, shiver, and shake, and when they come to themselves (for in all this fit Mahomet's holy-ghost hath bin conversin with them) they begin to preach what hath been delivered to them by the spirit." Claredon Mss. No. 2624. "It thus seems probable that Bennet merely employed a term already familiar, and quite appropiate as descriptive of Fox's earlier adherents." [1]

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[1] Oxford English Dictionary

This may be so, but it hardly seems likely that Justice Bennet should have been familiar with this small body in South London, nevertheless the term Quaker was thence forth applied to followers of Fox. The term Quaker as well as Friend will be used throughout this paper to refer to the followers of George Fox.

INNER LIGHT:

His was a doctrine of "Inner Light." Whoever followed the light would be freed of all evil; Fox taught that each one should work out his own salvation. "The divine power will support him; but let him not depend upon other men." [1] From the denial of the need of anyone to serve as mediator in attaining salvation arising from their faith in the "Inner Light" there resulted on the one hand their rejection of the clergy as a group set apart from the rest of the world, and on the other hand their insistence upon the universal priesthood of believers. According to the doctrine of the "Inner Light" which Fox preached, God calls His helpers from all classes, women as well as men; there is no need of special preparation for the office of preaching, but on the contrary special study might destroy the working of the Holy Spirit in the human heart. Believers of the "Inner Light" were to be constantly on guard against a worldly spirit, which must be combated by prayer, religious meditation and Bible reading, and kept in place by avoidance of diversions, reading and conversation of a worldly nature.

Fox was considered a mystical reformer by many of his enemies. However, there was much practical knowledge in his faith; all of his spiritual teaching was accompanied by desires and efforts for the moral, political, and

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[1] Auguste Jorns -- The Quakers as Pioneers in Social Work, p. 140

social welfare of his hearers. He preached against slavery, immorality, and war. He advocated freedom of thought in religious matters, influence by example, and he taught men to unfold the joy and heaven which each carried within his soul.

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES:

No account, however brief, of the Quakers would be complete without some explanation of the organization of the sect. In the early days of its existence no formal organization was definitely outlined, yet there was a spirit of order and discipline carried out in all services informally. Individual monthly meetings, for discipline were set up as early as 1653. In Durham, England, however, these were general meetings, which were held for discussion, for advice, and to take into consideration all matters of common interest. Quarterly meetings were held in some places for the purpose of discussing cases of those who had suffered for truth's sake and ways and means of helping the poor. [1]

Fox's intuition for all things that tended to help his followers was shown in his practical statement that there was a true Gospel order which should be exercised by spiritually minded Friends. One of his leaders, Thomas Ellwood, sets forth very clearly the purpose of the monthly and quarterly meetings--systems of meetings which have been followed to this present day with few changes. Ellwood says:

> "Not long after this, George Fox was moved of the Lord to travel through the countries from county

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[1] Allen C. Thomas-- History of the Friends in America, p. 38

> to county, to advise and encourage Friends to set up monthly and quarterly meetings for the better ordering of the affairs of the church; in taking care of the poor; and exercising a true gospel discipline for a due dealing with any that might walk disorderly under our name; and to see that such as should marry among us did act fairly and clearly in that respect."

The meeting likewise took care of recording sufferings of Friends, and extending aid to families of those in prison; to keeping records of births, marriages, and deaths and matters of lesser importance.

Further evidence of Fox's practicality are seen in his epistle to Friends in England and America wherein he advised them to open schools for teaching boys and girls whatsoever was necessary for making them useful citizens.

The Quaker sect as formulated by George Fox and his followers was not new in its fundamental tenets, for practically all Protestant faiths embraced the very principles which Fox so ably expounded. To him, however, must be given the credit for having cast out of his particular organization the materials, forms, and practices maintained by other Protestant denominations which he termed useless and for perpetuating a definite party through the establishment of a system of government. [1] To Fox must be given the credit

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[1] The Quakers considered such sacredotal rites as the eucharist, baptism, and common forms of prayer useless. Music, poetry, painting, and rich robes have a worldly savor; they would distract the mind from its spiritual life, hence there were no richly clad Quakers, no elaborately decora-

for having clarified for the masses the entire doctrine of spiritual freedom. This was a marvelous revelation to masses who had been taught that religion was for the chosen few, that God would punish the evil doer, that a priest or minister must intercede for one before the Heavenly Father.

Quakerism on the other hand was a refinement of the whole Separatist Movement. The true Quaker is the closest representative of the early spiritual church, for he spreads the doctrine of spiritual liberty for all; this was his continuous, persistent, and fundamental principle from the very earliest down to the present time both in England and America in spite of schisms. The main points of the teaching of Friends must be gathered from various documents issued at various times. Accepting the ordinary fundamental doctrines of Christianity, they differed from other denominations in several important respects which may be grouped under the following heads: first, the importance attached to the immediate personal teaching of the Holy Spirit or "Light Within"--this lay at the root of most of their testimonies; second, the disuse of all outward ordinances; third, the manner of worship and of appointment of ministers; fourth, the manner of carrying into daily life and practice the commands of Christ.

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ted churches and no music at Quaker meetings.

Charles Lamb's quotation gives an insight into a simple, formless Quaker meeting:

> "Would'st thou know what true peace and quiet mean;
> Would'st thou possess the depth of thine own spirit
> in stillness, without being shut out from the conso-
> latory faces of thy species, come with me into a
> Quakers' meeting."

Quakerism rejected the swearing of oaths before judges and state officials; it rejected war on the grounds that it violated Christ's commandment, "Thou shalt not kill." Quakerism provided an opportunity for women to participate in propagating religion on an equal footing with men; this latter provision made it possible for the very practical elements of their creed--care of the sick, care of the orphans, etc.--to be very definitely practiced.

The Friends were from the very beginning missionaries. While no systematic efforts were made in missionary work, records show that Friends visited Germany and Islands of the Atlantic and Pacific soon after their organization in England. The Quaker taught <u>all</u> men that God was eagerly seeking their salvation and not their destruction. God was personally calling each one to himself.

> "They thus presented an entirely different picture of God from that presented by the Puritans, and their zeal was such in those early days that in the minds of a large number of outsiders the term Quaker meant a people who were a terror to their religious opponents, and an unanswerable puzzle to the magistrates, and whose "frenzy" neither pillory, whipping-post, jail, nor gallow could tame. It was this sense of the universality of the Holy Spirit and the completeness of the salvation for each individual man through Jesus Christ, which not only made Quakers so hopeful for the whole race, but also ready to work for the bettering of mankind. There was no one too

high to be spoken to, no one too low to be considered. Thus we find Oliver Cromwell, the Pope, the Sultan visited and the slave and Indian pleaded for." [1]

As the dawn of the French Revolution approached, the rights of the men and the women were merged, and the great English writers fought for freedom. Such men as Paine, Priestly, and Godwin were champions of political reform; in humanitarian work expecially prison reform and anti-slavery agitation, Howard and Cowper were the champions; in simplification of religion, law and daily life, with particular emphasis against the luxury of the rich and privileged classes we find John Wesley, Robert Burns, and Mary Wollstonecraft the outstanding spokesmen; and in reform in the educational system Godwin and Cowper were two of the leaders. These four movements were not always clearly defined in the minds of their advocates, but in literature of the day one is constantly faced with the fact that only through political reform, prison reform, anti-slavery activity, universal benevolence, and the regeneration of schools, could a state of society be realized in which men and women would be valued solely for their individual worth. If these were the elements prevalent in all English literature of the time it is reasonable to believe that this stirring literature was partly influenced by the Quaker doctrines and principles. This love for individual freedom, love for freedom in religious thought, social reform and important development of the individual, strictest Quaker fundamentals, were destined later to influence American letters.

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[1] Braithewaite -- The Beginning of Quakerism, p. 54

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF QUAKERISM IN AMERICA

Chapter III

The success of Quakerism in England led to its spread in other parts of the world and particularly in the American colonies. Here was a virgin land being settled by those who had left Europe because of religious persecutions; it would therefore be supposed that religious freedom would be granted to all newcomers. Records show, however, that from the very first attempt of the Quakers to settle in Massachusetts they were severely persecuted and that later strict laws were passed against them.

QUAKERS IN MASSACHUSETTS:

Owing to the disorder in England, by 1656, the colonies of Massachusetts Bay had increased rapidly. It was hoped that having left England for greater religious freedom the colonists would be ready to grant religious liberty to all men and women. Nothing was farther from their intentions. The purpose of their coming to America was to do as they pleased in regard to religious matters. Stern opposers of toleration, one of their first actions was to send back two Episcopalians. Another episode opposing tolerance was the banishment of Roger Williams. No sooner were they clear of him than Ann Hutchinson and witchcraft disturbed the colony. Fines, imprisonments, whippings and death by torture were brought into use to clear the colony of difficult heretics. If the colonists found this the way to treat other people, it was understood that they would from the very outset be against the Quakers.

The first record of any Quaker in Massachusetts was that of two women, Ann Austin and Marie Foster who arrived from Barbadoes, early in July 1656. The deputy-governor heard of this and sent officials aboard who searched

their trunks and bags and took away one hundred books which they found, and later burned them in the market place. Neither of the women was allowed to write to Friends or to the Crown for aid. They were imprisoned and the windows of the jail were boarded up; and they were stripped and examined to ascertain if they were witches. All this occured before there were any laws against Quakers. These women were put on a vessel and sent back to Barbadoes. Two days after they left, a vessel arrived in Boston bearing eight Quakers. The captain was forced to take them back to England. After these incidents in October 1656 the first law was passed against the Quakers. A section of this law reads:

> "Whereas there is a certain sect of heretics--rose up in the world which are commonly called Quakers who take themselves to be immediately sent of God and infallibly assisted by the Spirit to speak and write in his book spirit to spirit and utter blasphemous opinions, despising government and the order of God in Church and commonwealth, etc....." [1]

Heavy penalties were provided for the masters of vessels who might bring Quakers into the colonies, whereas, any Quaker who came there by any other route was to be whipped and put to work, and no one was permitted to converse with him. Not seeming to understand this law, the Quakers continued to come until a second more stringent law in 1657 was passed. In October and May 1661 a law was passed to the effect that banished Quakers who returned were to

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[1] Allen C. Thomas -- History of the Friends in America, p. 53

suffer death. This law was vigorously enforced before the King interfered, three men and one woman being hanged on Boston Common. These cruelties were related to Charles II who issued the King's Missive, which reached the colony before the execution of other persons. Twenty-seven Quaker prisoners were thus liberated. In May 1681 the death penalty was repealed.

Notwithstanding the persecutions in Massachusetts, the sect grew in numbers in Rhode Island. Here under the liberal charter and administration they found a safe home.

In spite of the severity of the laws passed against them in all colonies except Rhode Island and Pennsylvania, Quakers continued to increase.

QUAKERS IN NEW AMSTERDAM:

The first four Quakers who visited New Amsterdam were received cordially, but when the two women of the party began to preach in the streets the cordial treatment was stopped. The women were roughly handled while the men were whipped and put into stocks. Word of this persecution was received by the Directors of New Amsterdam in the home country who sent the following note which later gave protection to Quakers:

> "We very much doubt if vigorous proceedings against the Quakers ought not to be discontinued except you intend to check and destroy your population, which, however, in the youth of your existence ought rather to be encouraged by all possible means.....The conscientious of men, at least, ought ever to remain free and unshackled. Let every one be unmolested as long as he is modest; as long as his conduct in poli-

tical sense is irreprochable, as long as he does not disturb others or oppose the government...." [1]

After receiving this letter the authorities ceased the persecution and Friends increased in numbers and political strength.

QUAKERS IN VIRGINIA AND MARYLAND:

The Quakers seemed to thrive on persecutions, for if they were put to flight in the northern colonies, they moved South. In Virginia their lives were made miserable by the Episcopalians. They were prevented from participation in the government and were often subjected to bodily harm as severe as that in Massachusetts. To avoid ill treatment many fled to Maryland while others moved farther south to the Carolinas. In each of these states Quakers were persecuted to some extent, but in Maryland instances of persecutions decreased and they became influential in the government of the state. Since Quakers would not take the oath of fidelity, contribute funds for the support of a militia, nor bear arms in the militia during the Claiborne trouble, they were subjected to whippings and the confiscation of their property. They were likewise regarded as contemptible and were persecuted because of their refusal to remove their hats in the presence of magistrates and their "standing presumptuously covered" increased their difficulties with the authorities. Nevertheless, after the Claiborne trouble subsided, Quakers became a powerful force in political affairs in Maryland.

During the year 1672 while making a strenuous preaching tour throughout the colonies, George Fox, the indefatigable founder of the Quaker faith, visited Maryland. Records tell us that the Friends were having internal

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[1] Bowden -- History of Society of Friends in America, p. 309

troubles at this time and that Fox traveled through all the colonies inspiring Friends to live up to their faith. Many persons were converted to the Quaker faith; many who had lost faith were restored. Fox visited Indian villages where his preaching among them helped to strengthen the peaceful relations between Friends and Indians. He also conducted meetings for discipline throughout the colonies in order to end the schism and to explain the true position of Quakers since he had been identified with radical sectaries both in England and in America. Besides all of these activities, George Fox inaugurated regular communications with the London Yearly Meeting.

QUAKERS IN NEW JERSEY:

About 1664 Friends settled in New Jersey along the Raritan River, and they also settled in 1670 in Shewsbury and Middletown. Fox visited Shewsbury and Middletown in 1672. In 1674 a difference between two of the proprietors of New Jersey, John Fenwick and Edward Billings, led to the assignment of Billing's share to William Penn. This might well be called the beginning of Penn's interest in the Colonies.

In spite of disputes over boundaries between West Jersey and East Jersey, the proprietors of New Jersey laid down the foundation of Quakerism in the new colony--these same principles were incorporated in foundations of Pennsylvania. An excerpt from a statement on their view of government which the proprietors of the colony issued plainly showed that liberal ideas were maintained. The statement reads:

> "Thus we lay a foundation for after ages to understand their liberty as men and Christians, that they may not be brought into bondage but by their own con-

> sent; for we put the power in the people--no persons to be called into question or molested for his conscience." [1]

This basic principle of liberty and freedom of worship which the Quakers preached and practiced laid one of the foundations for Transcendentalism in America.

QUAKERS IN PENNSYLVANIA:

Quakerism reached its highest development in Pennsylvania. Penn's connection with New Jersey inspired him to use his inherited province as an asylum for persecuted Quakers. William Penn joined the Quaker Society in 1667 and began at once to plan the establishment of a holy experiment in the wilderness of America. No founder of a State ever placed before him a nobler objective; few founders ever worked with as much zeal for he realized that he was setting a precedent. In the preface to his famous Frame of Government he laid down the following maxim:

> "Any government is free to the people under it, whatever be the frame, where the laws rule and the people are a party to those laws; and more than this is tyranny, or confusion."

He had previously written, in a letter to Friends, a more definite idea of his ideal government. He said:

> "I propose to leave myself and successors no power of doing mischief, that the will of one man may not hinder the good of a whole country." [2]

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1 Smith -- History of New Jersey, p. 80
2 Janney -- History of Friends in America, p. 175

Plans were completed and by September 1681 two emigrant ships set sail; these vessels landed in America off New Castle near the end of October.

Penn sent William Markham as deputy governor of these first vessels in 1681, and in 1682 he himself came to Pennsylvania. Much work lay before these settlers and their leaders. Penn had difficulty in settling boundary disputes with Lord Baltimore on the south and the Swedes in Delaware; the dispute between Penn and Baltimore, however, was not settled until Mason and Dixon surveyed the disputed territory in 1762. Penn also visited New York and New Jersey in the interest of the Society of Friends. His attendance at the Yearly Meeting in Maryland did much to increase the vigor of the Society. Penn's colony developed more rapidly than the others; within three years Quakers had established schools, printing houses, three monthly meetings and the population had increased to seven thousand. Many disputes arose between Penn's deputies and the Royal administration, but by the end of the seventeenth century these disputes had been settled and Friends had established congregations in all of the English colonies. They had complete control of Pennsylvania; at the same time they were extremely influential in New Jersey and Maryland. These Quakers were destined to influence the American mind greatly during its turbulent formative period of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

QUAKER CONTRIBUTIONS TO AMERICAN IDEOLOGY

Chapter IV

AMERICAN IDEOLOGY:

From the earliest colonial times down to the years just prior to the American Revolution the writings in the colonies were reflections of the mother country; indeed one might term the literature English literature written in America. As the breach between the colonies and England grew, a more native literature began to take root in that speeches, orations and sermons propagating freedom became the order of the day. Not until 1798, the beginning of Charles Brockden Brown's career, do we find a definite attempt on the part of an author to create a purely American fiction. The mind-set of the colonists prior to this time had been divided in regard to support of the claims of England, and as a result of this no all-embracing ideology had come to fruition; hence no purely American literature had developed. The nation was one of New Englanders, Virginians, Carolinians, or Pennsylvanians rather than Americans. There were, however, definite forces at work in the lives of the colonists which later, after the Revolution, developed into a well defined American ideology as exemplified in American literature. The Quakers brought the essence of this ideology to America, and the later Quaker writers fostered its growth. What is this American ideology? The fundamental principles may be summed up briefly as, first inner growth of the individual as a product of experiences which result in freedom. Therein is the germ of the Quaker "inner light;" second, the glorification of work as a discipline of life; third, the necessity for popular education; fourth, the adoration of motherhood and the family as the center of life; fifth, social

democracy as exemplified in community projects and social service; sixth, toleration for various religious beliefs; finally, the idealization of primitive life in the American scene. These fundamental principles of American ideology were not clearly seen by all; neither did they develop rapidly and smoothly as a result of concerted action on the part of Americans. They became clearly perceptible and universally accepted only after years of struggles with isms, antis, religious upheavals, women's rights wars, temperance movements, demands for more liberal grounds for divorce, and demands for the liberation of Negroes. All of these movements were consummated in the last, the successful carrying-out of which set the country afire, but out of the ruins men emerged wiser and a definite American ideology came into being. Quaker philanthropists such as John Woolman and William Penn, and Quaker writers such as Brockden Brown, Herman Melville, John Greenleaf Whittier, and Walt Whitman, had no small part in shaping this American ideology. It is true that the Society of Friends had difficulties in reconciling the methods of reform with their religious beliefs and that there were schisms and disownments which shook the solidarity of the Society; nevertheless the rank and file of the liberal Quakers gave the Abolitionist movement their hearty support and in the operation of the Underground Railroad did much to hasten the great catastrophe which ultimately cleared the minds of Americans so that a well defined ideology could develop.

JOHN WOOLMAN

SOCIAL SERVICE QUAKER TREATMENT OF INDIANS:

In the relief of the poor and insane, in education, in prison reform, in the battle against alcoholism, in justice, in trade, and in the origin of the one-price idea in industry and especially in the anti-slavery movement, the Quaker was in the van of economic and philanthropic endeavor. The Society of Friends was the first to have a systematic organization of charity. In order to support the poor within their ranks and partly to maintain their traveling ministers the Society prohibited all frivolous amusements and unreasonable extravagance in dress. By the use of preventative measures Quakers were always able to meet any economic stress. Records show that in Philadelphia, New Bedford, Boston, Nantucket and other eastern cities there were Quakers who acquired large fortunes from commercial enterprises. Many wealthy Friends both in England and America established trust funds for the needy; some of them established in England as early as 1655, are still producing incomes. So outstanding were the Quakers in manoeuvring their financial affairs that no Government aid was ever given to them, but their methods were held up to the British Government as models of organized thrift. Sir Frederic Morton Eden wrote:

> "The time may come when a wise legislator may descend to inquire by what medium a whole society in both old and new world is made to think and act with uniformity by upwards of a century; by what polity, without emolument from government they have become the only people on earth free from poverty;--by what economy they have thus prevented beggary among their members

whilst a nation groans under taxes for the poor." [1]

In order to maintain relief for their destitute, Quakers collected funds at their Yearly Meeting for the support of their poor and families of the persecuted; collections at Monthly Meetings were used for the poor and in part for the support of traveling ministers. Every able bodied Quaker had to work; those who asked for aid were publicly discussed and where necessary all branches of the family assisted the needy member. A caretaker was appointed for the needy family who acted in a capacity similar to the modern case worker. The secret of Quaker relief lay in help toward self-help; that principle has come down to the present time and is the basis of the relief administration.

The Quakers were undoubtedly the first settlers to deal honestly with the Indians. In bargaining for land and in converting the Indians to Christianity, the Friends labored long and unceasingly. William Penn in Pennsylvania and John Woolman in New Jersey were constantly urging fair treatment of Indians by Friends. Their labors were not in vain for whenever the Indians raided the outlying towns they were especially careful to avoid the Quaker settlements.

George Fox had held meetings with the Indians in Virginia as early as 1672 and through the use of an interpreter, Chilicott, a West Jersey Indian, he was able to convince the Indians that Quakers were their friends.

One of the most pathetic stories of the efforts of the early pioneers in their zeal for social service to the Indians is that of the Quaker, John Woolman. In the spring of 1763, he set out on foot over the Wyalusing trail, the most frequently used trail to the West, for the Indian village of Wyalu-

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[1] Auguste Jorns -- Quaker as Pioneers on Social Work, p. 58

sing. Woolman, a small man suffering with anemia and other ills made the journey with some difficulty; he labored with this tribe for some days only to discover that these Indians had decided to embrace the faith of the Moravian minister who had visited the village a few weeks prior to his arrival. This did not deter Woolman's missionary spirit for in 1766 he planned and executed an even longer walking tour among the Indians and slave-holding Quakers of the eastern shore of Maryland. Seven successful meetings were held among the Indians which strengthened the peaceful ties between Quakers and red men. Records of the Society of Friends also show that many emancipations of Negroes resulted from Woolman's journey to that region.

Woolman served his community as tailor, schoolmaster, preacher, surveyor and essayist. In spite of his eccentricity of wearing undyed clothes, his presence in every meeting, civic or religious was significant. As a schoolmaster he put into practice certain principles which modern educators consider extremely essential. One of Woolman's educational principles was that of giving each individual pupil instruction on the spirtual side. In his essay, "On Schools," he says:

> "To watch the Spirit of children, to nurture them in Gospel love, and labour to help them against that which would mar the beauty of their minds, is a debt we owe them....." [1]

Woolman's primer, "A First Book for Children," probably the first in New Jersey was printed by Benjamin Franklin and was used in Friends' schools, as well as the pay schools, throughout New Jersey and Pennsylvania. "A First

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[1] Gummere -- The Journal of John Woolman, p. 392

Book for Children," which now appears quaint with its wise rule on moral living atop each page and its sentences meticulously divided into syllables, contained many features which have been incorporated into modern textbooks. This primer emphasized the use of large type for beginners and short stories centering around incidents familiar to children. A few pen point drawings helped to make permanent impressions of the printed facts. Likewise his idea of coeducation which was new, was destined later to contribute much to the American ideology of equality for women in education.

Since Woolman's essays were widely read in literary circles of Philadelphia, it is safe to believe that his strict Quaker principles took root in the public mind and contributed in a great degree toward laying the foundations for that which later became American in life and letters.

Woolman was a tireless worker in behalf of the slave in those early days when public sentiment had not been aroused against the evils of the practice. In 1754 Woolman wrote An Epistle of Caution and Advice Concerning the Buying and Keeping of Slaves. This epistle was addressed in the main to slave-holding Quakers, however its influence was felt in all quarters. In this essay he made clear to the world the Quaker ideal of personal liberty for all human beings. Woolman made five trips to the north and south in his efforts to stop the trade in human freight. These were not futile trips for in 1758 the Yearly Meeting made the ownership of slaves a disownable offence. Later in 1769 New Jersey passed a law placing a fifteen pound duty on every slave sold within the colony. Woolman and other Quakers were directly responsible for this law.

A perusal of some of his essays reveals that his interests were wide--

covering every phase of social service to Indians, Negroes and Quakers.

In his essay, "On Silent Worship," the beauty of the Nature of an inward fellowship with God is extolled. Again we find him writing "On Loving Our Neighbors as Ourselves," "A Plea for the Poor" and "True Harmony of Mankind." Some of his most thought provoking essays were "On Slave Trade," "On A Sailor's Life," and "On Labor." The last named essay placed direct emphasis on the glory of work; many of the ideas expressed by Woolman would relieve conditions among idle men today.

The glory of work, the efficacy of education for all, the need for individual instruction in the educative process, the necessity for freedom of all persons within the country were principles which John Woolman disseminated through his writings. They were of course fundamentals of the Quaker faith: they later became fundamantals of American ideology.

LUCRETIA MOTT

SOCIAL SERVICE--WOMEN'S RIGHTS--ANTI-SLAVERY:

Examining further Quaker contributions to American ideology, we find that women of this sect played a most important part in creating public opinion in favor of all forms of social service. Quaker women helped to maintain the solidarity of their faith by assuming the responsibility for the welfare of each family within their immediate congregation. They shared household duties of the sick mothers, cared for the orphans, and visited imprisoned Friends. As the Society of Friends grew in numbers, their social service activities extended to persons outside of the Society. Negro slaves and fugitives received a great deal of help, and the poor in general were benefited. In 1820 Quaker women of Philadelphia organized the first public relief for the poor. Effects of this civic project were noted in other large cities where the need for poor relief was great.

The greatest and most far reaching contribution of Quaker women was that of the Women's Rights Movement which demanded freedom of speech for women, the right to vote, the right to make wills, the right to sue for divorce, the right to participate in politics, the right to pursue higher education, and the adequate protection of the law. One would hardly believe that such demands for freedom were necessary in America as late as the nineteenth century, however, such evidences of lack of freedom could not be denied. Quaker women had a great advantage over the rank and file of women in that they had had from the beginning of Quakerism equal privileges with the men of their faith. Other sects and public opinion considered it a disgraceful procedure for women to speak in public gatherings, or to think on issues of a religious, social, or political nature. Quaker women, however, often preached in the

meeting and spoke in public, and their recommendations were accepted by the Monthly and Yearly Meetings.

Women were in bondage almost as deep as Negro slaves until 1833 when a little band of Quaker women organized The Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society, which preached freedom for Negroes and women. This Society was directly responsible for starting the Women's Rights Movement which later secured freedom for women in every phase of American life. This was a momentous occasion in the lives of these women; they little knew how far reaching this anti-slavery meeting would be on the lives of women throughout the world, for after this meeting women grew confident of their own powers and determined to wage war in their own behalf. When the group had assembled, these women were embarrassed by the fact that they were forced to call upon a man to preside and direct the parliamentary procedure until a president and a working committee could be organized.

To Lucretia Coffin Mott must go the credit for having conceived the idea of an organization whose sole purpose was to fight for freedom of Negroes and women. "The flower of Quakerism" as she was called came of a long line of intelligent, seafaring, influential Quakers of Nantucket, Massachusetts. Her great-grand aunt, Mary Coffin Starbuck made Nantucket the second Quaker stronghold in America while Elihu Coleman, Mary Starbuck's grandson, founded the Underground Railroad in North Carolina in 1819. Lucretia Mott, coming from such a heritage of liberty-loving Quakers, found it easy to continue the war on human bondage.

Lucretia Mott's contribution to the American ideology lay in the fight for the emancipation of Negroes and women and in universal freedom of thought.

The Women's Rights Movement grew out of the anti-slavery movement, but before this great force had secured freedom for women it had affected every publication, every pulpit, every political organization, every fireside and drawing room in America. Starting as it did in behalf of the slave, the movement became, in the South, a religious revival which soon turned into an anti-religious war. Southern ministers who had never written took up their pens in defense of slavery and the smug situation of women. "Slavery was God's doing," they said; and they proceeded to flood the South with books expounding duties of slaves to masters. Notable among these were the Reverend Bishop Meade and the Reverend C. J. Postell.

In the North the Women's Rights Movement aided the Abolitionists. These two societies rocked the very foundations of the country with their spirited public meetings while their publications attracted the most able writers of the day. American literature was at this time fiery and bitter. Some writers defended the abolitionists and the Women's Rights Movement while others opposed every principle of these two societies. Two of the leading publications during this period, 1830-1865, did much to influence American ideas. The Anti-Slavery Standard, an excellent paper, attracted such men of note as Richard Dana who wrote in defense of women and slaves. However the leading ladies' publication, Godey's Lady's Book, did much to belittle the Women's Rights Movement. The author of this magazine, Mrs. Hale, was not in sympathy with Lucretia Mott because of her preaching in public, neither could Mrs. Hale understand the agitation of women for participation in national affairs. Godey's Lady's Book which was devoted essentially to fashions and beauty hints now began a series of propaganda articles sharply criticizing Lucretia Mott.

Lucretia Mott, however, maintained her steadfast purpose and continued to preach in behalf of freedom of thought and freedom for women and Negroes. Her battle was fought against women whose lethargy prevented them from seeing their own plight, against Northerners and Southerners who would not admit the evils of slavery nor the necessity for equality of the sexes. She declared:

> "I seek mental freedom and spirtual light so that
> I might consecrate myself to the service of humanity.
> How can I follow the light of God without a free,
> Singleminded use of the power He gives me?
> I thank God that I live at a time and under circumstances
> which make it my duty to lay open my whole mind
> with freedom and sincerity." [1]

Women's Rights lay close to her heart and during the turbulent years of 1840-1860 Lucretia Mott was a tireless worker in behalf of this movement. Unlike John Woolman, who was a writer and left essays, account books, pamphlets and a journal, Lucretia Mott was not an author. She left nothing save a few personal letters to her family. Her speeches became famous. When meetings of either the Anti-Slavery Society or Women's Rights became involved or pointless, Lucretia Mott rose and delivered a speech which would turn the tide in favor of freedom. She traveled over the entire northeastern and central seaboard delivering her soul stirring speeches for freedom. In 1840 she went to England as a delegate to the World Anti-Slavery Convention. Her disappointment was great when upon arrival she learned that she could not speak in any of the sessions solely because she was a woman. Her Quaker

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[1] Lloyd Hare -- The Greatest American Woman, p. 14

persistency served her in this instance; she secured permission to speak in several churches and so thought-provoking were her speeches that both the Anti-Slavery and Women's Rights causes were helped. As years progressed, the fruits of Lucretia Mott's efforts became more evident. She lived to see Negro slavery abolished and the Women's Rights cause thoroughly implanted in American life and letters. The freedom of women to enter into every phase of American industry, education, and service is now as thoroughly American as the flag.

The desire for personal freedom was one of the factors which caused the first settlers to journey to America; the desire to maintain this personal freedom was one of the main factors that led to the Revolutionary War. Personal freedom has always been an American ideal, but the introduction of slavery cast a shadow over this ideal and finally led to warfare. Out of this conflict there emerged the American ideology of personal freedom for all and tolerance for various racial groups.

The religious denomination taking the most decided stand against slavery was the Quakers. Regardless of locality the Quakers were always opposed to this evil and in spite of the contacts with Negroes which made them aware of the shortcomings of slaves, the fundamental principle of the Quaker religion led them to uphold their ideals of the rights of Negroes as men. From the very earliest times Quakers fought against slavery; they finally made the possession of slaves a disownable act. Quakers were always very practical in whatever they held to be right, hence they not only freed their slaves, but they inaugurated the practice of buying slaves and setting them free. Their settlements showed the most flagrant disregard for the Fugitive Slave Law of

1850. It was by the constant preaching of freedom for all men, by the practice of freeing men, and by the disruption of laws holding men in bondage that Quakers contributed to the idea of personal liberty.

The Quakers made use of that system known as the Underground Railroad in helping fugitives to reach free soil.

> "The Underground Railroad had no physical properties--coaches, rails, engines, etc.; its conductors collected no fares yet its express trains rumbled over a memorable network of routes through slave states to free states, out of democratic despotism to freedom in a land of kings and queens." [1]

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[1] Lloyd Hare -- The Greatest American Woman, p. 226

CHARLES BROCKDEN BROWN AND THE AMERICAN SETTING

Early American literature did much to influence the development of a respect for and an appreciation of primitive American scenes and characters. American literature was slow in adopting its own types and characteristics; this was due perhaps to the complexity of the population and to the loyalty to England which many citizens still maintained. With the advent of the new republic, there was a need for a new literature. Charles Brockden Brown took an active part in creating a native literature. His primary aim was to point out the rich and new American materials such as the Indian, our romantic borderlands, and the marvels of nature both human and physical. His secondary aim was to instruct the mind by pointing out prudence and practicality in social emancipation. Brown's early and vigorous portrayal of life in his native country won for him the distinction of being the first American man of letters.

His Quaker heritage, education, and native ability made him particularly equipped for the task of pointing the way to an American literature. From his parents he inherited earnestness of purpose, uprightness of character, tolerance for all religions, love for personal liberty and devotion to the simple things of life; these characteristics show a marked influence on his writings. A few facts from his childhood reveal that Brown was a serious, book-loving boy, much interested in geography. His parents were sensible enough to give him as much schooling as they could afford and thereupon sent him to the Friend's Latin School in Philadelphia. At this school Brown learned to love his teacher, Robert Proud, who gave him special instruction in French and German. This knowledge helped him later in his literary criticisms.

In 1787 when Brown was but sixteen years old, his schooling was brought to an end and his literary career was begun. He was apprenticed in the law office of Alexander Wilcocks where he met a group of young lawyers who had literary aspirations. They formed a literary club and membership in this club gave Brown an outlet for his talent. During his literary career he was a novelist, journalist, and critic.

Brockden Brown's first publication was a poem in honor of Benjamin Franklin; his second publication was a series of essays called the "Rhapsodist" which appeared in the Columbian Magazine of August 1789. From these works young Brown received recognition. His next publication was a volume in behalf of the rights of women. "Alcuin," as the volume was called, was not favorably received because of its serious style and unpopular subject; no one was interested in women's rights at that time. After this volume Brown turned to the writing of romances.

Brown's first novel, "Wieland or the Transformation," was published in 1798. This is a tragedy based on superstitions in two generations of the Wieland family. The general pattern of this story is a study in abnormal psychology wherein a father is possessed with an unusual desire to murder his wife. The father shows a growth in his religious attitude from the time that he conceives the plan until the awful crime has been committed; the father's religion then becomes a frenzy for he seems to feel that he is in direct accord with the Divine Will. Bearing in mind Brown's strict Quaker training we are conscious of his direct protest against a religion that believed in the wrath of God. The story goes on to show the strange death of Wieland by spontaneous combustion. Brown then dwells on the psychological effects of

the father's death on the younger Wieland and his strange punishment by ventriloquism. "Ormond" and "Arthur Mervyn," two later novels, follow this general style.

In these three novels Brown displays his definite literary formula. This consisted of

> "....grasping the attention, and ravishing the souls of those who study and reflect, by depicting characters of soaring passions and intellectual energy." [1]

Brown was ever searching for those elements that would make his readers feel that he was dealing with facts; he searched the new field of abnormal psychology for instances of unusual behavior. To arouse interest Brown used terror in his characters, however, this terror was caused by some one of the realities of life such as insanity, ventriloquism, fanaticism, plagues or savages. By these means Brown secured effects as thrilling as those in the Gothic novels of England.

In "Edgar Huntly or Memoirs of A Sleep-Walker" published in 1799, Brown displays his love for the wilds of America. He continues to catch the reader's attention by terror, he still teaches a practical lesson, but he now shows a realistic picture of the American Indian in a native setting. In this story Brown endeavors to show the true characteritstics of the Indians as the basis for genuine American fiction, hence the red men are shown in all their bloody glory. These are not the romantic Indians found later in the stories of James Fenimore Cooper.

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[1] David Lee Clark--Charles Brockden Brown -- A Critical Biography, p. 7

As Brown grew older, his novels underwent a change in formula. His last two novels show a change from the bloody villian of intellectual energy such as Wieland to the character expressing the nobility of simple life. Of this last type of novels "Jane Talbot" best illustrates this new them. Jane is the new type of woman making adjustments to a new social order in which a woman begins to find equality with men. This novel also shows Brown's interest in European affairs following the French Revolution. Later American novelists, poets and short story writers show a strong influence of Brockden Brown upon their works; all of them used the native American background. In Poe we see Brown's influence in his use of insanity, terror, and fanaticism; in James Fenimore Cooper we see the use of the American Indian as suitable subject-matter for literature.

Charles Brockden Brown took an active part in fostering a native periodical devoted to literature. Periodicals like all other forms of publications prior to 1783 were in form and subject-matter imitations of the journals of England. Early American periodicals were hampered by inadequate copyright laws and postal rates that made distribution difficult, nevertheless the New York Friendly Club undertook the editorship of a purely literary magazine. One gleans from the first number of the magazine that Brown's intention was:

> ".....to extract the quintessence of European wisdom;
> to review and estimate the labors of all writers,
> and to speculate on manners and morals." [1]

This early publication had various sections; the most popular section was Brown's The American Review. Here Brown showed his genius as a critic. His

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[1] David Lee Clark--Charles Brockden Brown -- A Critical Biography, p. 8

classical training, his knowledge of French and of German literature and his Quaker honesty and seriousness combined with his conscious effort to create a native literature made Brown the greatest American critic prior to Edgar Allan Poe. Brown believed in encouraging American writers yet he knew that he must use the same high standards of criticism as those used by English critics. Brown's criticism of poetry did not follow any hard and fast rule, rather poetry was considered for its substance in the light of contemporary life. He was extremely broad-minded in his rating of the many sermons and addresses of his time. However, even here when he saw an opportunity to assail hypocrisies and false doctrines, he was as severe as if criticising poetry or novels.

After devoting much time to the literary section of the weekly, Brown and the publishers found it a non-paying proposition so they changed the name to The American Review and Literary Journal and published it as a quarterly in 1801. This was the first quarterly magazine in America devoted to literature and much of the credit for its success must go to the Quaker, Charles Brockden Brown.

The United States was dubious as to the good intentions of Napoleon and the French in Louisiana at this time, and Brown used his pen to stir the patriotism of Americans. His famous pamphlet entitled: An Address to the Government of the United States on the Cession of Louisiana to the French; and on the Late Breach of Treaty by the Spaniards; Including the Translation of a Memorial, on the War of St. Domingo, and Cession of the Mississippi to France Drawn up By a French Counsellor of State proved to be instructive. This pamphlet and a succeeding one, The American Register gave valuable

political events of the time, especially events of the Napoleonic wars. Brown was able to translate French and German papers and hence to give an accurate account of foreign affairs. He would have been a far more excellent critic had he lived in an age of great literary activity. Brown, stern but versatile Quaker, was thus able to supply America with valuable information and at the same time to reflect American attitude during the early part of the nineteenth century.

QUAKER INFLUENCES PREPARE THE WAY FOR THE TRANSCENDENTAL MOVEMENT

Chapter V

The early nineteenth century saw the little village of Concord, Massachusetts become the center of one of the most interesting groups of intellectual pioneers, bearing the formidable name of Transcendentalists. They were a combination of the old Puritanism and the new Romanticism. The Puritanism of Cotton Mather and Jonathan Edwards had undergone considerable modification by the nineteenth century. This new group possessed a sense of intimacy with God in addition to such qualities of the Romanticists as strongly marked individuality which discarded outworn traditions, an intense feeling for God in nature, a keen appreciation of labor and simple life. They believed that God's manifestation of Himself in Nature included human nature, and that the spark of divine love planted in every man was to be the only real guide of his life in place of church authorities, creeds, or the Bible. "Plain living and high thinking" was their motto. The entire movement afforded opportunities for a more abundant life than New Englanders had experienced. As the movement progressed, it became identified with every effort for regeneration.

The whole Transcendental Movement found fruitful response because of the Quaker influences which had contributed much to the liberal elements of American thought. The most active period of the Transcendentalists was between 1830-50, yet its origin might be traced to the ordination of Jared Sparks in 1819. During that ceremony William Channing declared that Christ was a moral teacher and not a mediator between erring man and offended deity. In 1821 during his graduation address to Harvard seniors, Ralph Waldo Emerson

declared that religion could only be revitalized by men looking within rather than without for a revelation of God. These two addresses marked the progress of liberal religion in America and liberal religion was one of the forces contributing to the advent of Transcendentalism. Neither of the pronouncements was new. English Quakers, as well as the German philosopher, Kant, had preached liberal religious thought to Europeans since 1755. The Friends had paved the way for liberal religion from the very beginning of their organization and when they came to America, their exponents redoubled their efforts to make all feel their liberal forces.

The Transcendentalists preached the importance of each soul's participation in the world soul; this was but a restatement of another Quaker principle. The term Friend was an implication of this very principle; likewise the Quakers did missionary work among Indians, Negroes, and Europeans in testimony of their belief in a world soul. It was the meek Friend who visited filthy prisons and almshouses to pray for the inmates, or who remained in plague-infested cities to nurse the sick. All were brothers in the Quaker estimation of humanity. America had experienced liberal religion in all of its ramifications as a result of Quaker activities.

In thought the Transcendental Movement was partly connected with English social reform movements. Here again we find evidences of early Quaker influences, for the Quakers led the way to better living conditions, thrift in industry, more liberal participation in the government for the masses in England; in America all of these were advocated in addition to the freedom of slaves. The movement finally became a part of the anti-slavery agitation. Quakers had always opposed slavery and during the period 1830-50 they were

especially active in this respect.

There was no closely welded organization, nor any well defined formula of procedures, hence eccentricities found their way into the ranks of the Transcendentalists. Quakers were not responsible for these. The Transcendental Movement was enthusiastically received by ministers as a means of breaking with the old Puritan tradition; by the reformer as a means of regeneration for downtrodden groups; by the poets, novelists, and essayists as a means of expounding the inner meaning of external nature. Quakers had always expounded a theory of the inner meaning of external life. The enthusiastic response to Transcendentalism was due to the firm, yet liberal foundations which Quakerism had built in the national mind.

HERMAN MELVILLE

THE NEW GENRE:

Herman Melville's Quaker heritage influenced his symbolism and Transcendental implication. Melville was engaged in writing his best works at a time when the Transcendental eccentricities had become apparent, however, he did not become involved. He did influence the Transcendental Movement by the new materials which he used; he wrote of the intangible, subtle region of spiritual reality.

Melville's early life was filled with adventures on the sea which led to a lack of stability. In his wanderings as a sailor Melville learned the bitterness of life and the artificiality of civilization. His adventures carried him to peaceful islands of the South Pacific where he observed life in a more perfect state than in America. These hardships and observations caused him to question the bitterness of life and to look into the metaphysical world for reality.

"Moby Dick," the story of a white whale, is one of his best. It has been read the world over for the thrilling narrative; even high school students appreciate this element, but this is not all that the author had in mind when writing the novel. "Moby Dick" seeks to immortalize the life of New England whalers. The story begins with realism as only a true sailor such as Melville could use, but as the story progresses his symbolism becomes apparent.

> "The White Whale swam before him as the monomaniac incarnation of all those malicious agencies which some deep men feel eating in them, till they are

left living on with half heart and half a lung." [1]

Here the author is speaking of more subtle and spiritual things than the mere life of whalers. The author is seeking to find the one great principle that lies beyond mere life and this leads him searching into the mysteries of metaphysical worlds. The crew is symbolic of abstract human qualities; Flask might well represent mediocrity in humans; Stubb is symbolic of indifference and restlessness, and Starbuck of moral weakness. The ocean is symbolic of death as Ahab finally loses his life after being jerked into the water by the line as the vessel, Pequod, sinks. The white whale is symbolic of a terrible demonism in the world.

In "Pierre" Melville writes of a more subtle quality, virtue. He is questioning whether there are such qualities as vice and virtue. Pierre wanders through situations in his life on the South Sea Isles testing his strength and finally he comes to the realization that vice and virtue do not exist. He further realizes that heavenly righteousness is not possible to attain, and if one could attain that degree of virtue it would be out of accord with the civilized world.

Melville is responsible for having introduced subject matter rich, elusive, and perplexing to American literature. His Quaker heritage caused him to protest against the spiritual smugness and sterility of the previous generations. His great effort was to discover reality by probing regions of man's metaphysical world. The Transcendentalists were greatly influenced by Melville's interpretation of things spiritual.

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[1] Herman Melville -- Moby Dick, p. 105

QUAKER PROPOGANDIST AND POET

Chapter VI

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER:

Our study of the Quakers who have influenced American life and letters brings us to the Quaker Militant," John Greenleaf Whittier. Perhaps no individual member of the sect exerted such powerful, far reaching, and effective influence (through his writings) on the education of the public mind during its struggle to secure liberty of conscience, the recognition of the sacredness of human life, and equal rights for all peoples, as did this poet of freedom. Whittier lived during an even more tempestuous time--the Civil War Period, than did John Woolman, who lived during the crisis of the formation of this new nation. Both men, though staunch members of the Quaker sect, proved aggressive for the cause of freedom; freedom for the Indian, the slave, and the American conscience. Whittier's fifty years of profuse writing placed him as the chief American author during the terrible Civil War experience in the United States.

LACK OF ADVANTAGES:

John G. Whittier was born in 1807 on a farm near Haverhill, Massachusetts; his ancestral farm house, which he immortalized in "Snow Bound," had been built by the first American Whittier who migrated to this continent in 1683. A depiction of this home may be gleaned from these lines:

> "We piled, with care, our nightly stack
> Of wood against the chimney-back,--
> The oaken log, green, huge, and thick,
> And on its top the stout back-stick;
> . . . . . .
> We watched the first red blaze appear,

Heard the sharp crackle, caught the gleam
On whitewashed wall and sagging beam,
Until the old, rude-furnished room
Burst, flower-like, into rosy bloom." [1]

Whittier was surrounded by hard labor, self-denial, and indifference to cultural ideals that were frequently found in a dreary community of infertile farms.

Although the original Whittier had been a Puritan, the family was early converted to the religion of the Friends or Quakers, to which sect the poet adhered throughout his life. Whittier was proud of his Puritan heritage because it had struck the blow in the colonies against the tyranny of England; he was likewise proud of the fighting Greenleaf side of his family. The blood of these families culminated in John Greenleaf and thus produced his manysided, yet simple nature which could be aroused to a fighting pitch whenever his principles were violated.

In the absence of close neighbors and the leisure interests of a highly socialized community, young Whittier early took an interest in the fireside conversations of his elders and thus became familiar with colonial legends, traditions, and superstitions. Here his father, or his Uncle Moses, or some passing tramp furnished thrilling tales of New England hills, Indians and seaports. These native stories later became the basis for his regional poems and legends, those literary pieces which have maintained for him the name of America's first exponent of regional poetry. Such legends dealing with enchanted foxes, phantom vessels, witchcraft, Indians and those of foreign

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[1] John Greenleaf Whittier -- Snow Bound

lands acquired in his mature readings provided materials for the rambling tales known as his ballads.

Whittier's only other childhood diversions were attending the Quaker meetings and reading the thirty books which comprised his father's library. These books, for the most part, were the Bible, Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, religious tracts, and accounts of Christian martyrs. We learn from the following rhymed catalogue of his home library, which he wrote at the age of sixteen, the handicaps which Whittier's artistic temperament suffered because of the lack of contact with the world's literary masterpieces. One may picture this shy, artistic lad wincing under the regime of a stern Quaker home, longing for more inspirational material than:

"The Bible towering o'er the rest,
Of all the other books the best.
Old father Baxter's pious call
To the unconverted all.
William Penn's laborious writing,
And the books 'gainst Christians fighting.
Some books of sound theology.
Robert Barclay's "Apology."
Dyer's "Religion of the Shakers"
Clarkson's also of the Quakers.
Many more books I have read through--
Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" too.
A book concerning John's baptism,
Elias Smith's "Universalism." [1]

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[1] Whittier Land, p. 24

Such an austere, restricted reading list could not open to this potential poet the wide range of emotions which must be included in great literature.

His schoolmaster, Joshua Coffin, first read the poems of Robert Burns to him and thereby opened a new world to his imagination. He immediately became a disciple of Burns, and this influence is seen later in his attempt at subtle humor and dialect.

During his schooling under Coffin, Whittier wrote poems for his classmates; it was one of these original poems, "The Deity," which so pleased his sister that she secretly sent it for publication to William Lloyd Garrison, the editor of the newly organized abolistionist paper, Free Press. Garrison, who published this poem November 27, 1826, was impressed with the efforts of young Whittier, and after publishing several of his poems, he went out to Haverhill, Massachusetts to see the young poet.

The elder Whittier was a stern, God-fearing, hard-working man who did not encourage his son's writing of poems. John's labor was needed in the fields, and although he was often ill, he was required to assist with farm work. It was upon one such day while Whittier was working in the field that William Lloyd Garrison paid him a visit. Garrison was attracted to young Whittier when the tall, handsome, yet frail youth appeared in his homespun clothes around the corner of the barn upon being summoned by his father. A friendship of long duration developed at once. Garrison was able to persuade the elder Whittier that John needed further education. Whittier worked for months at the shoemaker's trade in order to earn expenses for a six months' term at Haverhill Academy. Later he supported himself through another term by teaching; altogether Whittier's higher education consisted of three terms

at Haverhill Academy. He read widely after his contact with books and teachers at this school.

Thus we find the young Quaker, handicapped by poverty, poor health, a meager literary home environment, and a limited formal education, unrelieved by travel or contact with the intelligentsia, embarking on a literary career which was to last fifty odd years. This career turned him sharply from a true poet to a preaching moralist--a propagandist in the cause of liberty, and then, in the mellow years of the writer's life after his cause had been won, again turned him to poetry for poetry's sake. Such a vicarious career was the result of his inherited nature of Puritan and Quaker blood, of the age in which he lived, and of his wide range of interests.

MAN OF DIVIDED INTERESTS:

As early as 1826 and up to 1833 Whittier was devoting much of his time to journalism. We find him in Boston as editor of the American Manufacturer, and in 1830 he was back in Haverhill editing the Haverhill Gazette; later he became editor of the New England Weekly Review. From 1833 to 1853 he was chiefly interested in politics and the abolition of slavery, and one sees him writing innumerable poems and editorials denouncing slavery. During this period he was using every degree of energy which his ill body could produce in fighting for the cause.

Although he was ill, he accepted the position as Secretary of the Haverhill Anti-slavery Society; this necessitated a great deal of correspondence, writing of editorials, and speaking at anti-slavery meetings. His espousal of the cause of abolition inspired the birth of enmity against him even in the New England States and caused his person to be in danger. He and

his English friend, George Thompson, were mobbed at Concord, New Hampshire, in 1835 while they were attempting to speak in behalf of freedom.

Whittier's friendship with William L. Garrison led him to enlist in the cause of the abolitionists. In this movement he quickly advanced to a position of leadership, and was recognized as one of the shrewdest politicians of his time. His lifelong ill health prevented him from holding any office save that as a member of the legislature of the state of Massachusetts, however, he was instrumental in the rise and fall of many public officials of his day. Such men as John Quincy Adams, Henry Clay, Daniel Webster, Edward Everett, James Birney, and William Cushing felt the weight of his influence, either for or against them, in their political careers.

Whittier received little or nothing for his poems during this trying period of political oppression. This fact, coupled with his success in helping to publicise William Cushing's political views, led him to concentrate his energy on politics rather than on a literary career. Cushing was running for Congress on the Whig ticket, but since he had so often been defeated and had now lost his wife, he decided to withdraw from politics. When Whittier learned of this, through cunning, he persuaded Harriman, Cushing's editor, to urge Cushing to stay in the race until he, Whittier, could reach the eligible age for a candidate. Cushing remained a candidate until Whittier became of age, but the Whigs lost the election and Whittier's chances of ever becoming a member of Congress died forever. This experience, however, served to show Whittier that he would be more appreciated if he devoted his writings to politics. He had a poet's soul, as well as a shrewd business sense, and therefore saw the possibility of using both poetry and politics in supporting

the cause of abolition. Through poetry he could denounce the annexation of Texas on the grounds that it increased slave-holding territory, denounce the gag rule in Congress, secure the election of abolitionists in state legislatures, and force the state of Massachusetts to pass a right-of-jury bill for fugitives. The calm Quaker had by this stage in his life become the militant agitator.

James R. Lowell says of him in the National Anti-Slavery Standard of December 2, 1848:

> ".....If we should attempt to depict the peculiar characteristics of Whittier, we should say that of all poets he the most truly deserves the name orator... .....He is the Quaker Peter Hermit and Crusader. Preaching is his natural vocation..... His oratory is that of a prophet rebuking, denouncing, forewarming, seeing evil days afar off. If ever a man deserved the title of poet (maker) John Greenleaf Whittier does." [1]

This seemed a fitting delineation of Whittier at that time, however, as his cause was won, he turned ffom the reformer to the calm artist of heart and home.

While he made enemies because he had dared to support an unpopular movement, he also made friends and a reputation in political and journalistic circles. The Abolitionists were growing in power; they published many newspapers of which the Pennsylvania Free Man was one of the most widely read.

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[1] Albert Mordell -- Quaker Militant, John G. Whittier, p. 172

Whittier was the editor of the Pennsylvania Free Man in Philadelphia from 1838 to 1840. In the last mentioned year a mob burned the office building, destroying his manuscripts and type, and threatened him with personal violence. After this experience Whittier returned to Amesbury, Massachusetts more determined than ever to wage war on slavery. This was a bitter time; he was ill, extremely poverty-striken, and mentally uneasy over the lost friendship of Garrison. He wrote in The Independent of June 7, 1840 the following lines which were expressive of his depressed state:

"Oh for the power to dedicate anew
Heart, soul and spirit to the right and true-----
To offer up on Duty's holy shrine
The morning incense of a heart like mine !
But vain the wish ! [1]

Relief came to him through the wealthy English Quaker, Joseph Sturge, who offered Whittier the job of guiding him on a tour of the principal eastern cities of America. Sturge paid all expenses of the trip and in 1841 the two visited Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington. Calling on President Tyler, Henry Clay and John Q. Adams during the course of their trip. This tour helped Whittier spiritually as well as financially, for upon his return to Massachusetts he again took up journalism and public life. He became the editor of the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Reporter.

In 1847 he again took up the work of editing an abolition paper, The Era. To this paper he contributed some of his best prose "Old Portraits and Modern Sketches." Along with his editorial work, Whittier wrote a number of anti-slavery poems. These poems he collected and published in 1849 under the

[1] Albert Mordell -- Quaker Militant, John G. Whittier, p. 119

title of "Voices of Freedom."

Whittier's Quaker religion made him keen to social problems of his day. "The Songs of Labor," a decided improvement in technique over the anti-slavery and Indian poems, proved the wide range of labor conditions which came under his pen. The ship-builders, shoemakers, huskers, lumbermen, drovers, fishermen, factory workers and temperance workers, were all made subjects of his poetry and editorials.

The anti-slavery activities, together with politics, labor, and temperance, were not the only topics to attract Whittier, he was also interested in love. This last named interest proved to be as baffling to his family and friends as it was nerve racking to his body and soul. Whittier was a handsome man; endowed with virtues that would have made him an ideal family man, yet he remained a bachelor throughout life. He was unusually attractive to women. Women of intelligence and culture broke the conventional bonds of etiquette in order to place themselves in his company. They wrote to him, visited him, helped him in his work, and fell in love with him. He kept up a lively correspondence with Gail Hamilton who fell desperately in love with him and often visited him at Amesbury. Whittier never openly responded to her overtures and continued to dally until she became gradually reconciled to his indifference. She went West to travel and eventually forgot him.

Whittier's many friendships with desirable women won for him the name of "male coquette." His lack of appreciation for the friendship of Lucy Larcom, an intellectual woman, was lamentable. Miss Larcom loved Whittier and worked diligently with him in publishing three books for children, "Child-Life," "A Companion Volume of Prose," and "Three Centuries." Friends of both Miss

Larcom and Whittier knew of the invaluable assistance which Lucy rendered to the sick poet during the preparation of these books, yet the only acknowledgment of her assistance was the following excerpt found in the preface of "Child-Life." The brief acknowledgment reads:

> ".....It is but just to acknowledge his obligations to kind friends whose valuable suggestions have materially aided him; and, in an especial manner, his indebtedness to Lucy Larcom, so well known in connexion with "Our Young Folks," who has given him the benefit of her cultivated taste and very thorough acquaintance with whatever is valuable in the poetical literature of "Child-Life."

This was a poor way by which to repay love and faithful services.

As early as 1831 Whittier had suffered a nervous breakdown mainly as a result of having been rejected in love by Mary Emerson Smith. She was his cousin and classmate at Haverhill Academy, and although she was a Quaker, she was gay and more worldly than Whittier desired her to be. Mary E. Smith refused his persistent and ardent love-making on the grounds that he was poverty-stricken and lacked social position. After her marriage to a wealthy man, Whittier wrote several poems about her. One poem, "Stanzas," published in the Manufacturer forgave Mary for rejecting him. He tried to soothe his soul in such lines as:

> "Forgive thee--ay--I do forgive thee,
> And bless thee as we part,
> And pray that years may never leave thee

My agony of heart,

I call no shadowy malison

Upon thy fair young brown,

But would thy life might ever run

As sunwardly as now."

However, this message did not heal the wound, for some time later he wrote a poem "To S. E. M." which was to the same Mary Emerson Smith. Cornelia Russ, another lady of his heart, refused to marry him because of his poverty, rustic position, and partly because she felt that he still loved Mary Emerson Smith. In this last respect she was correct; Whittier was still insanely in love with Mary E. Smith. In March, 1832 Whittier published "The Demon Lady" which was an attack on Mary for her trifling with his affections.

While in this dilemma of love, Whittier wrote poems of farewell, of passion, of hope, of resignation, and of destiny. In these poems he bares his personal experiences of the heart which make them sad in nature. They make no worthwhile contribution to his permanency. He sometimes spoke against coquettes and philanderers, yet he was guilty of trifling with the hearts of many women.

He realized the existence of a conflict between morals and sex; his attitude toward sex was Puritanical but tinged with modern radicalism. In his "Literary Recreations and Miscellanies" of 1854 there appears one sketch of a fallen woman. This woman later marries her former lover and lives happily ever after. Whittier made her marriage happy because she defied public openion, thereby displaying a hint of modern radicalism. He was liberal in his views toward sex sinners as seen in "A Woman." An excerpt is

here given:

"O, Dwarfed and wronged, and stained with ill,
Behold! thou art a woman still!
. . . . . .
Cast off the grave clothes of thy sin!
Rise from the dust thou liest in,
. . . . . .
Rise up, and break thy bonds of shame.
. . . . . .
What lip shall judge when He approves?
Who dare to scorn the child he loves?" [1]

Another example of liberal views for sex sinners is found in the ballad of "John Underhill." Underhill had been driven out of Boston for some misdemeanor, he wandered into the town of Cocheco and confessed his former deed and asked to be given some office in the town. His frankness won the people, and he was made their ruler. Things went well for a time, but Underhill sinned again:

"The tempter's arrows that rarely fail
Had found the joints of his spiritual mail;
And men took note of his gloomy air,
The shame in his eye, the halt in his prayer,
The signs of a battle lost within,
The pain of a soul in the coils of sin." [2]

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[1] John G. Whittier -- A Woman

[2] John G. Whittier -- John Underhill

Finally Underhill called the town together and said:

"I have sinned, I own it with grief and shame,

. . . . . .

I urge no plea. At your feet I lay

The trust you gave me, and go my way.

Hate me or pity me, as you will

The Lord will have mercy on sinners still;

And I, who am chiefest, say to all,

Watch and pray, lest ye also fall.

. . . . . .

Into the desert alone rode he,

Alone with the Infinite Purity;

And, bowing his soul to its tender rebuke,

He measured his path with prayers of pain

For peace with God and nature again." [1]

Underhill finally was forgiven for his acts.

Whittier's liberal views toward the sex delinquent were not used as shields for his own relations with the many women of his circle. No where in any of the biographical material on Whittier does one find anything that even hints of a lack of rectitude, or of sex delinquency. And though he was in love and rejected many times, no scandal was created. Perhaps the truest picture of the inner conflict which this lover suffered is to be gained from lines in his "The Namesake," where he says:

"His eye was beauty's powerless slave,

And his the ear which discord pains;

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[1] John G. Whittier -- John Underhill

Few guessed beneath his aspect grave

What passions strove in chains." [1]

This period in Whittier's life from 1826 to 1850 was truly a period of strife. He was ever fighting poor health; he was torn by the break in friendship with his staunch friend, William L. Garrison; he was distracted by the unrequited love for Mary Emerson Smith; he had suffered the direst poverty; he had worn his nerves to threads writing and speaking for the abolition of slavery; and he had been a shrewd politician working for the election of abolitionist candidates in the legislature of Massachusetts and the United States Senate.

As the Abolitionists grew in power and the cause gained in popularity between 1853-1860, and as economic and political trends pointed to the ultimate conflict between the North and the South over slavery, Whittier seemed to have sensed victory for his cause. The indignation of the reformer began to give way to the calm artist. Previous to this time, he won fame nationally as an agitator and most of his friends were from the ranks of the abolitionists, now he turned more to literary circles; such writers as Longfellow, Lowell, Holmes, and Emerson became his friends.

Whittier was always a sociable type who enjoyed the friendship of men and women, yet he bewailed society that worshipped wealth. The symbolism in his "Maud Muller" is expressive of the fact that Whittier always lamented his rejection by Mary Emerson Smith on the grounds of his poverty. There is a universal regret for the barreness of those who place wealth and social position above love. A beautiful farm girl, Maud Muller, symbolic of Mary Emerson

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[1] John G. Whittier -- The Namesake

Smith who was seeking social position, captured the heart of the "Judge," who was a symbol of the haughty rich. The Judge would have married Maud had he not reflected thus:

"But he thought of his sisters proud and cold,
And his mother vain of rank and gold.
So, closing his heart, the Judge rode on,
And Maud was left in the field alone." [1]

The ballad further tells that the Judge was never happy, although he married a wealthy woman. His punishment consisted of memories of the simple-hearted Maud Muller. The Judge's inmost thoughts were expressed in these lines:

"Ah, that I were free again !
Free as when I rode that day,
Where the barefoot maiden raked her hay." [2]

Maud likewise had aspirations for a marriage of wealth and social position. She dreamed of a marriage with the Judge as a means of increasing the family wealth, for she says:

"He would dress me up in silk so fine,
And praise and toast me at his wine.
My father should wear a broadcloth coat;
My brother should sail a painted boat.
I'd dress my mother so grand and gay,
And the baby should have a new toy each day." [3]

She was disappointed in her marriage because of her yearning for wealth instead of love. Her lot was that of a poor man's drudge whose constant thought

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[1] John G. Whittier -- Maud Muller
[2] Ibid
[3] Ibid

was, "It might have been."

"Maud Muller," the most prodied poem in American literature, was not at first understood by the public; it was, however, symbolic of his dejection. The last lines leave with us his saddest thought by stating:

> "Ah, well ! for us all some sweet hope lies
> Deeply buried from human eyes;" [1]

"Maud Muller," "Chapel of the Hermits," "Questions of Life," and "The Barefoot Boy" were written during this period of transition. Whittier also began to send poems to The Atlantic Monthly at this time. Instead of the name propagandist, he was better termed the ballad maker.

On December 27, 1857, Whittier received an upsetting blow by the death of his mother. The ties between mother and son (who had spent practically all of his life at home) were very strong, and her death shocked him into inactivity. He wrote the following message to a friend:

> "....The world looks far less than it did when she was with us. Half the motive force of life is lost."

Being poverty-stricken at this time, Whittier was forced to borrow money from his friend, Sturge, to meet the emergency occasioned by death.

The war clouds which had been gathering between the North and the South brought open conflict in 1860. Whittier responded to the horrible times by writing sixteen popular war poems. His staunch Quaker religion and moral caliber forbade him to glorify war; so that not one of the war poems was in celebration of a victory or an urging of revenge upon the South. Some of his war poems are extremely stirring, however. He did not approve of coercion

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[1] John G. Whittier -- Maud Muller

toward the South, neither did he approve of compromises on the part of the North. Whittier preferred to heap coals of fire on the conscience of the offenders until freedom was won. A passage from "The Proclamation" shows this to be his middle course:

"Arise and flee! shake off the vile restraint
Of ages; but, like Ballymena's saint,
The oppressor spare,
Heap only on his head the coals of prayer.
Go forth, like him! like him return again,
To bless the land whereon in bitter pain
Ye toiled at first
And heal with freedom what your slavery cursed." [1]

As the possibilities of freedom for the slave became unmistakably clear, and as Whittier saw the reforms for which he had so long fought come to pass, he set to work to write about New England life, the same theme of some of his earliest poems.

He was now living in comfort with relatives first at Oak Knoll then at Danvers, Massachusetts. In this calm atmosphere the aged writer produced such masterpieces as "Snow Bound," "Home Ballads," "The Tent on the Beach," "Among the Hills," many hymns and some poems of religious themes. "Snow Bound" not only increased his wealth by ten thousand dollars in royalties, but it also brought him overwhelming praise from the critics and the public. These two volumes "The Tent on the Beach" and "Among the Hills" show a marked high degree of artistry in the aged poet. He had made a definite effort to

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[1] John G. Whittier -- The Proclamation

improve his technique and to recapture the spirit of youth; in both of these respects he was extremely successful. Whittier had succeeded in gaining the sincere acclaim of the literary world and lasting fame through his poems of old age. No poet in America has gained the fame that Whittier gained from poems written after he was fifty years of age. He had revived and exhausted the New England themes in the volumes "The Tent on the Beach" and "Among the Hills." In these he reiterates the themes that had been put aside for the stirring abolition poems, but never had they died in the poet's mind. He tells us this in the following passage from the preface of "The Tent on the Beach."

> "I would not sin, in this half-playful strain,--
> Too light perhaps for serious years, though born
> Of the enforced leisure of slow pain,--
> Against the pure ideal which has drawn
> My feet to follow its far-shining gleam.
> A simple plot is mine: legends and runes
> Of credulous days, old fancies that have lain
> Silent from boyhood taking voice again, ..."

The poems included in the volumes mentioned did not show growth intellectually, but they did show technical artistry and a widened scholarship.

In spite of the popularity and artistry in these volumes, there appeared a growing weakness in the poems which followed. In 1881 his "Miriam," "The Pennsylvania Pilgrim" and "Hazel Blossoms" were published; these poems showed that Whittier was declining. He seemed bent on religious themes and hymns. Purity and piety were their chief characteristics and these characteristics

influenced poetry for many years to come. Indeed Whittier's continual employment of these passive qualities led to the prevailing idea that piety and purity were the all-important requisites of fine poetry. Thus the hoary-headed, calm Quaker wielded greater influence on the trend of American poetry in his decline than during the fire of his youth.

December 17, 1877, Whittier's 70th birthday, was an occasion of great rejoicing. Hosts of friends, bearing gifts and flowers, made a pilgrimage to his home. He was further felicitated by tributes in the newspapers and magazines throughout the country. The sands in his hourglass of life were now running smoothly but slowly toward the end; there was, however, much work that the aged poet undertook. In 1887 his "Vision of Echard" showed some poetic fire not seen in "Miriam" or "Hazel Blossoms." This volume contained the beautiful child's poem "Red Riding Hood" and the most interesting short ballad--"King Solomon and The Ants." In these poems Whittier won new praise from the public. His volumes "St. Gregory's Guest" published in 1886 and "At Sundown" published in 1892 were likewise acclaimed by the public, although these volumes served to increase the belief that piety was the criterion of poetry.

There was another great celebration in honor of Whittier's 84th birthday. After receiving the applause of his visitors upon his long life and successful career he said to one of his guests:

> "I am not insensible to literary reputation;
> I love, perhaps too well, the love and praise
> of my fellowmen; but I set a higher value on
> my name as appended to the Anti-Slavery Declara-

tion of 1833, than on the title page of any book." [1]

Quietly on September 7, 1892 in the home of friends in Hampton Falls, New Hampshire, the ancient warrior laid down his pen forever. He had fought a long battle in behalf of enslaved Negroes and enslaved public opinion; he lived to see the principles for which he fought come to a successful fruition.

SOURCES OF INSPIRATION:

Whittier, the man of divided interests, often writing during his early years with the white heat of passion, had little thought concerning the technique of his poetry. This sloverness of verse form was overcome to a great degree as he grew in experience and came to realize the necessity for a more orderly style. It was, therefore, not from the standpoint of form and technique that Whittier's poetry influenced American literature, but it was rather from the standpoint of sources of inspiration and materials. His first inspiration was drawn from his love of God and the simple Quaker faith, which promolgated above all principles, human freedom and righteousness. Whittier's gentle nature led him to believe that a just God commanded the activities of men. He further believed that there was a co-equality of divinity of all men. Some of his earliest poems were extremely religious, showing the poet's utter piety and unquestioning faith in the Bible.

Among the early poems of a religious nature may be found his paraphrases of the Psalms and dramatic scenes from the Bible. One poem of this type, "Jephthah," published in the Haverhill Gazette of June 1827, shows his imagination, as well as his unscholarly versification.

"Sing not of Jepthah's deeds, he wildly cried;

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[1] William Sloane Kennedy -- John Greenleaf Whittier, p. 331

A fiercer fire shot from his troubled eye,
His brow grew dark as midnight and he passed
With hurried stride to where a love cliff threw
Its ragged shadow on the mountain's slope--
There drew his sword, that sword which oft had mown
Its crimson path thro' Ammon's dark array,
Bearing her loftiest down; and from the verge
Of the steep crag, he cast it as in scorn
Like some wild meteor, through the moonlit air,
It glanced an instant and its last stem blow
On the dark rocks that checked its downward course,
Gave forth a sound like battle's thrilling clang." [1]

"My Soul and I" and "Questions of Life," written in 1833 after the poet had attained some degree of fame, show the effect of his readings in scientific revelations which were published as a result of Darwinism. The opening stanza of "My Soul and I" gives the key to the poem:

"Stand still, my soul, in the silent dark
I would question thee,
Alone in the shadow drear and stark
With God and me!" [2]

The remaining stanzas put forth a series of questions for the soul to answer; these questions seek to find out why the soul was created, what work for God it had done, what work for mankind it had done. The soul first answered that:

"Of all the work my hand hath wrought

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[1] Frances Mary Pray -- A Study of Whittier's Apprenticeship, p. 32
[2] John G. Whittier -- My Soul and I

Beneath the sky,

Save a place in kindly human thought,

No gain have I." [1]

The question is then asked concerning the eventual home of the soul. The answer is given in several stanzas, to the effect that life should be lived in the present. The following lines bear out the fact that Whittier was deeply affected by the love for God and service to mankind in the present:

"O restless spirit! wherefore strain

Beyond thy sphere?

Heaven and hell, with their joy and pain,

Are now and here.

Back to thyself is measured well

All thou hast given;

Thy neighbor's wrong is thy present hell,

His bliss, thy heaven.

And in life, in death, in dark and light,

All are in God's care:

Sound the black abyss, pierce the deep of night,

And he is there!" [2]

This last line re-affirms Whittier's belief in the omnipotence of God.

"Questions of Life" shows an even stronger feeling of love for God and an unwillingness to seek further into the mysteries of life, of nature, and of science. In the opening lines there is a desire to refrain from disturb-

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[1] John G. Whittier -- My Soul and I

[2] Ibid

ing the accepted truth, which Darwinism had upset. He says:

"A Bending staff I would not break,
A feeble faith I would not shake,
Nor even rashly pluck away
The error which some truth may stay
Whose loss might leave the soul without
A shield against the shafts of doubt.
And yet, at times, when over all
A darker mystery seems to fall,
(May God forgive the child of dust,
Who seeks to know where Faith should trust!)"

He can not forego asking some of the many questions which Darwin's famous thesis. The Origin of Species had raised in the minds of the theologians, scientists, and philosophers. He is concerned with attempting to find out what he is, from whence he came, what part he plays in the workings of the scientific world, what is his true relation to other objects in this world. He says in part:

"What sings the brook? What oracle
Is in the pine-tree's organ swell?
What may the wind's low burden be?
The meaning of the moaning sea?
The hieroglyphics of the stars?
Or clouded sunset's crimson bars?
I vainly ask, for mocks my skill
The trick of nature's cipher still."

The poet turned to ancient writings, and inscriptions on ruins in his quest for answers to the mysteries, but these also fail to solve the questions. So he ends his search by turning to the "inner light" within his own heart. In the closing lines which are here given, the poet finds it useless to probe the mysteries of God:

"To Him, from wanderings long and wild,
I come, an over-wearied child,
. . . . . .
I turn from Fancy's cloud-built scheme,
Dark creed and mournful eastern dream
Of power, impersonal and cold,
Controlling all, itself controlled,
Maker and slave of iron laws
Alike the subject and cause;
From vain philosophies, that try
The sevenfold gates of mystery,
And, baffled ever, babble still,
Word-prodigal of fate and will;
From Nature, and her mockery, Art
And book and speech of men apart,
To the still witness in my heart;
With reverence waiting to behold
His Avatar of love untold,
The Eternal Beauty new and old!" [1]

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[1] John G. Whittier -- Questions of Life

God is unfathomable and hence man will not be able to answer the many questions concerning the science of life and nature.

Whittier's religious inspiration led him to write many hymns and lyrics which were set to music by persons other than the poet. Dr. Martineau's "Hymns of Praise" contain seven of Whittier's religious lyrics; the "Unitarian Hymn and Tune Book" has seven hymns of Whittier's and Longfellow and Johnson's "Hymns of the Spirit" contains twenty-two Whittier hymns. This collection of hymns, used by various denominations, is indicative of the far-reaching influence of Whittier's religious inspiration.

Among his exquisite religious lyrics are "The Wish of To-day" and the prayer hymn found at the end of the poem, "The Brewing of Soma." The poem relates an ancient custom of the priests of some oriental lands who brew a drug which caused inbibers to loose their sane judgment. The poet felt that Christians were guilty of sins just as base. He says:

"And yet the past comes round again,
    And new doth old fulfil;
In sensual transports wild as vain
We brew in many a Christian fane
    The heathen Soma still!"

Following this stanza appears the prayer-hymn which is an appeal to the Heavenly Father for His blessing and aid. This hymn is one of the most beautiful in our language; a few of the stanzas are here given:

"Dear Lord and Father of mankind
    Forgive our foolish ways!
Reclothe us in our rightful mind,

In purer lives thy service find,
    In deeper reverence, praise.

In simple trust like theirs who heard
    Beside the Syrian sea
The gracious calling of the Lord,
Let us, like them, without a word,
    Rise up and follow thee.

O Sabbath rest by Galilee!
    O calm of hills above,
Where Jesus knelt to share with thee
The silence of eternity
    Interpreted by love!"

. . . . . .

Drop thy still dews of quietness,
    Till all our strivings cease;
Take from our souls the strain and stress,
And let our ordered lives confess
    The beauty of thy peace.

Breathe through the heats of our desire
    Thy coolness and thy balm;
Let sense be dumb, let flesh retire;
Speak through the earthquake, wind, and fire,
    O still, small voice of calm!" [1]

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[1] John G. Whittier -- The Brewing of Soma

There are many religious lyrics similar to this which have been used by all church denominations ever since their publication. Much of his fame was derived from his hymns.

Whittier always gave full play to his religious yearnings. He defended God and all of His acts toward men. Throughout the entire scope of his poetry and prose, he tried to show that God was just and that one's prayers were always answered by God. Often he spoiled what would have been beautiful poetry by unnecessarily addressing God and adding a moral. This last fault is particularly noticable in his "Songs of Labor." One of the labor songs, "The Fishermen," is a rousing song breathing of ocean spray, winds, the "mottled mackerel" and mist-sprayed jackets. The various fishing fields are described, and the expected profit from the haul is counted, and then without a plausible reason, the poet adds the depressing moral warning which contributes nothing to the general theme of the poem nor to its beauty. One can see that such a lilting stanza as this:

"Though the mist upon oar jackets
In the bitter air conjeals,
And our lines wind stiff and slowly
From off the frozen reels;
Though the fog be dark around us
And the storm blow high and loud,
We will whistle down the wild winds,
And laugh beneath the cloud!" [1]

would be ruined immediately by the addition of a stanza foreboding doom. This

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[1] J. G. Whittier -- The Fishermen, stanza 8

stanza, which adds a moral tag follows:

"In the darkness as in daylight,
On the water as on land,
God's eye is looking on us,
And beneath us is his hand !
Death will find us soon or later,
On the deck or in the cot;
And we cannot meet him better
Than in working out our lot." [1]

The Quaker poet became the exhorter who over-emphasized his infinite love for God and thereby limited his achievement. Nevertheless, his religious inspiration was so deeply inbedded in his philosophy of life and so ever-present in his poetry that it influenced the criteria of American poetry for many years.

Whittier's opportunity to read the major English poets, after his introduction to them while a student at Amesbury Academy, likewise served as the basis for interest in social reforms and in the people about him. Robert Burns was one of his favorite foreign authors; to him Whittier was indebted for the inspiration to write rural folk poems. His reading of Burns led him to compose humorous poems in dialect; most of these show a decided aping of Burns and a stringing together of rhymes. One extremely amusing poem illustrative of his rhyming dialect is given in part here:

"I ken there's mair in this wide world,
An trust me, I'll nae greet for ane;
I'll further goe, an better fare,

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[1] J. G. Whittier -- The Fishermen, stanza 9

And ye, proud lass, mau live alone !

Then gie me back my ring again;

I winna waste its worth on thee--

My jewels breet--my gowden chain--

The de'il may hae ye then for me;

For I'd nae gie a pint o' wine

To hae ye say ye wad be mine." [1]

While Whittier's humorous dialectic poems contributed nothing to his fame as one of America's chief poets, they did help him to cultivate a sense of humor which served him well in the mellow years of his writing.

Milton proved to be another source of inspiration to Whittier. He early learned the revolutionary qualities of Milton's works and likewise took his cue from social conditions of his time which were in dire need of reform. Milton had given up chances of poetic reputation for the cause of freeing his countrymen from tyranny of the Church, press, and unmerciful marriage laws. Whittier gave up his desire for a purely literary career to preach the cause of freedom for the slaves through his writings. In espousing the cause of the slave, he lost many friends, but unlike Milton, Whittier lived to see the cause for which he fought triumph. Whittier was so impressed with Milton's fiery prose works that he once wrote in a letter John P. Hale the following opinion of Milton:

".....Blind Milton approaches nearly to my conception of a true hero. What a picture we have of a sublime old man, as sick, poor, blind and abandoned

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[1] Frances M. Pray; from Song, September 1827 -- A Study of Whittier's Apprenticeship as a Poet

of friends, he still held fast his heroic integrity, rebuking with his unbending republicanism the treachery, cowardice, and servility of his old associates." [1]

Milton's works on reforms influenced Whittier, but his interest in the down-trodden race dated back to his early youth when he read Caleb Bingham's American Perceptor which contained the poem "The African Chief." In this poem there was much that aroused the young Quaker to defend a crushed people, and one stanza in particular seemed to have been the key that unlocked his heart in the cause of the slave.

"Does not the voice of reason cry,
Claim the first right which Nature gave
From the red scourge of bondage fly,
Nor deign to live a burdened slave!" [2]

This stanza was often repeated by him and appears in later years in his masterpiece "Snow Bound." The theme of this stanza runs through many of his anti-slavery poems.

Whittier launched into his anti-slavery work with the full knowledge that such a course would mean the sacrifice of literary preferment, that his articles would be excluded from most of the magazines and newspapers of the time, and that the conversion of the public to the cause of freedom would be a long struggle. He was perfectly willing to devote his efforts to the abolition of slavery, for he said:

"Called from dream and song,
Thank God! so early to a strife so long

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[1] Albert Mordell -- Quaker Militant, John G. Whittier
[2] Caleb Bingham -- The African Chief, Reference

That, ere it closed, the black, abundant hair
Of boyhood rested silver-sown and spare
On manhoods temples."

The prophecy in these lines came true; Whittier was white headed before abolition became effective, yet there was an overwhelming feeling of pride in the success of the movement which he enjoyed.

The Quaker poet's most permanent contribution to American literature was his poems of freedom. From F. H. Underwood, one of Whittier's biographers, comes this pertinent thought:

> ".....The poetry of the anti-slavery movement in the U. S. exceeds in bulk, as it does in inspiration, power, and beauty, all poems written on subjects of great national importance in the latter centuries, and of this abolition poetry Whittier's was the best and has alone survived." [1]

This statement is held to be true by all of his biographers; it is, therefore, to the anti-slavery poems that we turn to find the bulk of his poetry, and the writer at his fiery, vigorous best.

Whittier was a poet with a great purpose and though he loved beauty, he considered it secondary in art to morality. He made it his burden to add a moral to each poem and to fire darts of malediction at the slaveholders. These poems were written during the burning period of anti-slavery agitation, and although the institution which occasioned such literature and the hostile spirit attendant upon it have long been a matter of history, Whittier's anti-

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[1] Albert Mordell -- Quaker Militant, John G. Whittier, p. 179

slavery poems arouse a universal feeling of scorn for oppression, injustice, and iniquity while on the other hand these poems are still affective in their advocacy of human freedom and righteousness.

In 1849 Whittier published his "Voices of Freedom," a collection of anti-slavery poems, some of which had been written as early as 1833 and published in various anti-slavery papers. This volume contained thirty-eight poems ranging in subject-matter from the idealization of a black hero in the West Indies, Toussaint L' Ouverture, to those of mockery and scorn for the slaveholders. These poems showed a marked tendency toward fatal fluency; the poet seemed never to know the right place to stop, yet this type of poetry swayed the emotions of the nation in behalf of the slave; it not only focused the attention of the nation on the unwholesome institution of slavery, but it led to the gendre of ringing propaganda poetry which continued to flourish until the war was declared. In this anti-slavery group there were poems which simply made a pathetic statement and left the fact to make its own appeal. Often the facts presented a bloody story with the warning of retributive justice tacked at the end; an example is seen in "The Slave Ships."

The poem opens with a description of the ship's crew clearing the dead slaves out of the ship's hole while the captain issues such orders as:

"Heave up the worthless lubbers,--

. . . . . .

Now let the sharks look to it,--

Toss up the dead ones first!" [1]

Corpse after corpse is thrown into the sea as the grim captain looks on. Af-

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[1] John G. Whittier -- The Slave Ships, stanza 1

ter disposing of the corpses, the captain decides that the blind captives are likewise burdens, so he orders the living men, women, and children who have been rendered blind as a result of the long dark sea passage and diseases to be cast into the sea. The poem continues with a realistic view of the ship's hole as the crew enters to fetch the blind victims. Heart-rending shrieks and groans issue from the starving, fear-crazed slaves. The blind ones were brought forth to receive such a fate as:

"Overboard with them, shipmates !
Cutlass and dirk were plied;
Fettered and blind, one after one,
Plunged down the vessel's side.
The sabre smote above,--
Beneath, the lean shark lay,
Waiting with wide and bloody jaw
His quick and human prey." [1]

There are more cries of agony as the helpless creatures are dropped into the sea. A storm arose and during the fury a catastrophe befell the crew. A strange ship comes near, but passed as the ill-fated crew calls out:

"Help us! for we are stricken
With blindness everyone;
Ten days we've floated fearfully,
Unnoting star or sun.
Our ship's the slaver Leon,--
We've but a score on board,--

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[1] John G. Whittier -- The Slave Ships, stanza 6

Our slaves are all gone over,--

Help,--for the love of God!" [1]

In this stanza the retributive justice has been meted out to the slave ship's crew. The vessel floats on to the West Indies where the climate is ever pleasant, and where birds, flowers, and fruits abound, but the slaver and his crew are unable to see any of this beauty.

"But vain were bird and blossom,

The green earth and the sky,

And the smile of human faces,

To the slaver's darkened eye;

At the breaking of the morning,

At the star-lit evening time,

O'er a world of light and beauty

Fell the blackness of his crime." [2]

"The Slave Ship" is typical of an early group of anti-slavery poems which were full of a deep appeal for the abolition of the traffic in human chattle. There was no ranting, no declaration of what should be done to stop slavery, yet everyone recognized the evils of that institution and the summons to human forces to blot out the wrong.

As the anti-slavery movement intensified its efforts and came into open conflict with conventionalities and law, Whittier's poetry became scornful and full of mockery. "The Hunters of Men," "The Yankee Girl," and "The Pastoral Letter" lead in biting condemnation of slavery. This second group of propaganda and scornful poems focused the attention of the country on the

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[1] John G. Whittier -- The Slave Ships, stanza 12

[2] Ibid, stanza 16

evils of slavery.

"The Hunters of Men," written in 1835, satirizes one of the chief sports of the Southern gentleman, turning the zestful hunting idea into mockery. The second stanza creates particular sympathy for the slave in its exposure of those whose vocations and moral training should lift them above the hunting of men in cane-brake or glen. Such a picture as the following brought fire on the slaveholder:

"Gay luck to our hunters!--how nobly they ride
In the glow of their zeal, and the strength of their pride!--
The priest with his cassock flung back on the wind,
Just screening the politic statesman behind,--
The saint and the sinner, with cursing and prayer,
The drunk and the sober, ride merrily there.
And the woman,--kind,--wife, widow, and maid,
For the good of the hunted, is lending her aid:
Her foot's in the stirrup, her hand on the rein,
How blithely she rides to the hunting of men!" [1]

Southern women were ridiculed for their participation in all activities that fostered slavery. The poem continues its satire by frequent references to "land of the brave and home of the free" which are set next to incidents citing infringement on the rights of men. The remaining stanzas infer that the cause of the slaveholder is losing its ground, and the "hunters of men" have wasted their energies therefore they turn renegade to their own cause. The final stanza sums up this idea and ends with a sarcastic question in this man-

[1] John G. Whittier -- The Hunters of Men, stanza 3

ner:

"Alms--alms for our hunters ! why will ye delay,
When their pride and their glory are melting away?
The parson has turned; for, on charge of his own,
Why goeth a warfare, or hunting alone?
The politic stateman looks back with a sigh,--
There is doubt in his heart, there is fear in his eye.
O, haste, lest that doubting and fear shall prevail,
And the head of his steed take the place of the tail
O, haste, ere he leave us ! for who will ride then,
For pleasure or gain, to the hunting of men?" [1]

The entire poem derides the happy, carefree slaveholders whose hunting had turned to that of running down helpless fugitives.

Another poem from "Voices of Freedom" which is taunting in nature rather than apologetic is "The Yankee Girl." The poem opens with a description of a beautiful Northern farm girl sitting at her cottage door spinning as she sings softly, her work is interrupted by the appearance of:

"Who comes in his pride to that low cottage-door,--
The haughty and rich to the humble and poor?
"Tis the great Southern planter,--the master who waves
His whip of dominion o'er hundreds of slaves." [2]

The visitor chides Ellen for engaging in such a homely industry as spinning. He pleads with her to leave the chilly North; to go South where a balmy climate and a life of ease await her; where such honest work as spinning was not

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[1] John G. Whittier -- The Hunters of Men, stanza 5
[2] John G. Whittier -- The Yankee Girl, stanza 3

included in the life of a lady. His final plea reaches a high pitch in the following stanza:

"O, come to my home, where my servants shall all
Depart at thy bidding and come at thy call;
They shall heed thee as mistress with trembling and awe,
And each wish of thy heart shall be felt as a law." [1]

Ellen is so much incensed at her guest's suggestion that hereyes flash as sunshine on steel. Drawing herself up to full height she throws the following retort at him:

"Go back, haughty Southron! thy treasures of gold
Are dim with the blood of the hearts thou hast sold;
Thy home may be lovely, but round it I hear
The crack of the whip and the footsteps of fear!
. . . . . .
Full low at thy bidding thy negroes may kneel,
With the iron of bondage on spirit and heel;
Yet know that the Yankee girl sooner would be
In fetters with them, than in freedom with thee!" [2]

The characters in these anti-slavery poems spared no efforts to ridicule the South on its institution of slavery. Whittier's famous "The Pastoral Letter" not only scorned the ministers for their laxity in denouncing slavery more forcefully, but it also ridiculed those abolitionists who objected to women being members of the abolition ranks. This poem opens with several stanzas whose theme review the practice of former noble christians to preserve the

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[1] John G. Whittier -- The Yankee Girl, stanza 7
[2] Ibid, stanzas 9, 11

church by racks, fire, and ropes. What more biting satire could one find than in these stanzas:

"O, glorious days,--when Church and State
Were wedded by your spiritual fathers!
And on submissive shoulders sat
Your Wilsons and your Cotton Mathers
No vile "itinerant" then could mar
The beauty of your tranquil Zion,
But at his peril of the scar
Of hangman's whip and branding-iron.

The, wholesome laws relieved the Church
Of heretic and mischief-maker,
And priest and bailiff joined in search,
By turns, of Papist, witch, and Quaker!
The stocks were at each church's door,
The gallows stood on Boston Common,
A Papist's ears the pillory bore,--
The gallows-rope, a Quaker woman!" [1]

The references to the uncivil treatment which Puritans dealt to people of varying religious faiths, focused attention on the church. Whittier was disappointed in the non-interference policy which the church was pursuing at that time. In another thrust he asks:

"And will ye ask me, why this taunt
Of memories sacred from the scorner?"

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[1] John G. Whittier -- The Pastoral Letter, stanza 3

He continued the taunting by turning the pages of history on cases of intolerance and stifled liberty. His answer to the above question is found in stanza seven where he says:

"No,--for yourselves alone, I turn
The pages of intolerance over,
That, in their spirit, dark and stern,
Ye haply may your own discover !
For, if ye claim the "pastoral right,"
To silence Freedom's voice of warning,
And from your precincts shut the light
Of Freedom's day around ye dawning;
If when an earthquake voice of power,
And signs in earth and heaven, are showing
That forth, in its appointed hour,
The Spirit of the Lord is going !
And, with that Spirit, Freedom's light
On kindred, tongue, and people breaking,
Whose slumbering millions at that sight,
In glory and in strength are waking!"

The vigor of Whittier's satire completes the poem as here and there references are made to the coming of God and the Angel of Freedom is extolled.

Whittier's anti-slavery poems were lengthy in structure, voluminous in number, and fiery in spirit. They did not show, as a rule, careful workmanship, but they did show him to be a prophet preaching universal freedom. The spirit of his abolition poems, which were published in abolition newspapers

and in the volume "Voices of Freedom," caught the attention of the entire country and focused this attention on the evils of slavery. These poems set the pace for all poems during the stress of pre-Civil War days.

It was as the poet of New England rural life that Whittier made a lasting artistic contribution to American literature. He was wholesomely provincial, as was his model Burns, who had been the perfect expression of unsophisticated Scotland, so Whittier spoke for rural New England. His work as a poet of freedom and singer of the oppressed ended with his fiftieth birthday, and as the Northern forces won in the Civil War, thereby abolishing slavery, Whittier's cramped sense of duty to political reforms passed and left him free to renew his interest in his native New England. In depicting nature, human nature, and the simple country life of his immediate environment, he is unsurpassed among Americans. He reduced American rural home life to an exceedingly narrow and restricted locale.

Whittier's early poems of New England, written before the abolition poems, were long and full of digressions, but all early American literature was full of digressions then and his was not the worst. Whittier was the first writer to collect New England legends and to write poems on them; He thereby received credit for creating regional literature. Among these early legendary poems we find unnamed Indian poems, "The Death Song 1829," "The Demon's Cave," "The Weird Gathering," "The Murdered Lady," "The Unquiet Sleeper," "The Spectre Warriors," and "The Black Fox." The titles lead us to imagine the superstition and witchery contained in the poems.

"The Black Fox" is the best of these early pieces based on folklore because of its simplicity of expression, directness of details, and the absence

of a moral tag. The setting is, of course, the New England farmer's fireplace on a winter night. The children beg the grandmother to tell their favorite story of the black fox. Grandmother consents; she paints a glowing picture of the exploits of her husband in attempts to capture this fox. She plays upon the superstitions of children by giving the fox supernatural powers, for she says:

"And there was something horrible
And fiendish in that yell;
Our good old parson heard it once,
And I have heard him tell
That it might well be likened to
A fearful cry from Hell." [1]

The grandmother continues the story with the incidents of the two young boys who go to hunt this black fox, but who perish in the snow drifts. Indians find their bodies and inter them in the mountain. Some months later a strange traveller acting under the spell of the fox visits the farmer's home; he doesn't engage in any of the household gossip but nods in a knowing way in the direction of the mountain. He glides off as strangely as he had come leaving the farmer's family in awe. The poem ends with this superstitious note:

"For people say that every year,
When winter snows are spread
All over the face of the frozen earth,
And the forest leaves are shed,
The Spectre Fox comes forth and howls

[1] Frances M. Pray -- A Study of Whittier's Apprenticeship As A Poet, p. 79

Above the hunter's bed."

"Snow-Bound," a winter idyl, published in 1866, made him known as a nationally great poet. In this long and largely autobiographical poem, he turned again to the fireside of a New England farmhouse. Here he stands out as no American poet had done as a painter of snow scenes in rural localities. Excerpts from the poem show how observant he was of details. The poem opens with a foreboding note indicative of the blizzard; one almost feels the chill as the sun sinks out of sight before its usual time for setting and know:

"A chill no coat, however stout,
Of homespun stuff could quite shut out,
A hand, dull bitterness of cold,
That checked, mid-vein, the circling race
Of life-blood in the sharpened face,
The coming of the snow-storm told." [1]

All the nightly chores are performed before the storm actually breaks and rages throughout the night. Whittier paints beautiful pictures of the farm without as well as the home within. Such lines as:

"All day the hoary meteor fell;
And, when the second morning shone,
We looked upon a world unknown,
On nothing we could call our own." [2]

makes a vivid picture. Then a long passage describing the soundless world adds to the poet's laurels as a painter of rural winter beauty. The passage reads:

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[1] John G. Whittier -- Snow-Bound, stanza 1
[2] Ibid, stanza 2, lines 6-9

"No church-bell lent its Christian tone
To the savage air, no social smoke
Curled over woods of snow-hung oak.
A solitude made more intense
By dreary-voiced elements," [1]

The poet turns next to a picture of the life within the house.

The details of stacking the firewood between forked sticks, the illumined fire-place equipment, the household pets at ease before the blaze, the mother busy with her spinning, the refreshments of cider, nuts, and baked apples all put the reader in an atmosphere of sympathy for this snowbound family which has the good fortune to be well supplied with food, firewood, and entertainment. Each member of the family, together with the maiden aunt and the village schoolmaster, told stories of his youth or knowledge he had gained from books and gossip. Each member presents a perfect character study of a New England type. Unfortunately Whittier could not forego his all-absorbing propaganda wage, so he drags in his Reconstruction ideas which are totally irrelavant to the subject. In spite of this flaw "Snow-Bound" is outstanding as a regional poem and points the way to a long line of regional poems.

"The Tent on The Beach" and "Among the Hills" offered beautiful poems which showed the success of years of effort. Whittier was a good story teller. Limited as he was by a weakness in verse technique, he wisely chose the four-line ballad stanza and one or two simple metrical forms for most of his narratives. The folklore and local tradition that formed the material for

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[1] John G. Whittier -- Snow-Bound, stanza 5, lines 5-9

his narrative verse lent itself admirably to this simple treatment. The simplicity, sincerity, and directness that were his chief qualities of excellence were essential qualities in this type of poem, so his ballads stand out in his entire collection of poems.

In the volume "The Tent on The Beach" there appears a popular ballad, "The Changeling," which embodies the elements of New England tradition. There is a young mother who had lost her mind temporarily, and as a result of this she does not recognize her infant and desires to toss it into the fire. She labors under the impression that Goody Cole had bewitched her; whereupon Goody Cole was cast into prison. The mother insists that her husband:

"Rake out the red coals, goodman--
For there the child shall lie,
Till the black witch comes to fetch her
And both up chimney fly."

She continues: . . . . . .

"She'll come when she hears it crying,
In the shape of an owl or bat,
And she'll bring us our darling Anna
In place of her screeching brat." [1]

The goodman is grief-stricken to see his young wife so mentally unbalanced. Whittier, always believing in the efficacy of prayer, has the husband to pray in this manner:

"Lead her out of this evil shadow,
Out of these fancies wild;

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[1] John G. Whittier -- The Changeling, stanzas 4 & 9

Let the holy love of the mother

Turn again to her child.

. . . . . .

Comfort the soul of thy handmaid,

Open her prison-door,

And thine shall be all the glory

And praise for evermore." [1]

The prayer was effective, for the mother's mental faculties were restored. Then she orders her husband to ride swiftly to the Justice at Newbury to get a release in order that the jailer might set Dame Cole free:

"And the grave and worshipful justice

(Upon whose soul be peace!)

Set his name to the jailer's warrant

For goodwife Cole's release." [2]

This a splendid example of the four line ballad stanza which served him so well in this type of poetry.

"Telling The Bees" is one of the most frequently read of Whittier's ballads. Its appearance today in six standard textbooks on American literature for secondary schools attests to its permanency in native literature. The ballad uses the old English legend of the farmers covering their beehives when a death occured in the family. This was done to prevent the bees from discovering the death and seeking a new home. In this ballad Whittier showed poetic skill.

As the lover draws near the farmhouse wherein dwells his sweetheart, he

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[1] John G. Whittier -- The Changeling, stanzas 13, 15

[2] Ibid, stanza 26

points out the merits of the estate:

"There are the beehives ranged in the sun;
And down by the brink
Of the brook are her poor flowers, weed o'er run,
Pansy and daffodil, rose and pink." [1]

Even though the lover had visited the girl only a month before, he is so much in love with her that the interval seemed a year to him. The ballad continues with the lover recalling how he refreshed himself at the brook before entering the gate. His reverie is stopped by the appearance of the chore-girl. Nothing in the farm yard has changed save the row of beehives and it is this fact that arrests his attention:

"Before them, under the garden wall,
Forward and back,
Went drearily singing the chore-girl small,
Draping each hive with a shred of black."

As soon as the lover sees this he knows that someone has died, and thinking that the dead one is his sweetheart's grandfather, he walks nearer:

"But her dog whined low; on the doorway sill,
With his cane to his chin,
The old man sat; and the chore-girl still
Sung to the bees stealing out and in.

And the song she was singing ever since
In my ear sounds on:--
'Stay at home, pretty bees, fly not hence!

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[1] John G. Whittier -- Telling The Bees, stanza 3

Mistress Mary is dead and gone.'" [1]

The note of suspense found in the end of the ballad is as effective as the quaint legend and the melodious manner in which it is told. Whittier's ability to tell a story, simply and melodiously gained for him a place in the front rank of ballad makers. "Telling The Bees," "The Witche's Daughter," "Skipper Ireson's Ride" and many others are as fine in legend and technique as those of Wordsworth. His versified New England legends and ballads were the first to give definite recognization to the wealth of fascinating folklore in the states of Massachusetts, Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Connecticut and Rhode Island. In fostering regionalism Whittier, in his pioneering volume, "Legends of New England" published as early as 1831, pointed the way for Longfellow and Hawthorne in their use of New England legendary themes.

The volume "Among the Hills" published in 1869, contained the poet's best works of later years and although he was nearing the end of his cycle of New England themes, his art in this volume remained on a high level. It is in this volume that we find a tone of cloying sweetness and purity; the poems show the mellowed temperament of an old man of experience who had returned with joy to the themes nearest his heart--those of New England folklore. These poems had a far-reaching effect on the temper and nature of American poetry for years to come. One poet, Walt Whitman, dared to break away from the poetry of sweet sentiment and rhyming four-lined stanzas.

The poem "Among the Hills," from the volume by the same name, illustrates the poet's ability to paint beautiful scenic effects, to tell a story effectively; and through all of this weave a moral. The poem opens with a beautiful

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[1] John G. Whittier -- Telling The Bees, stanzas 13, 14

description of the Sandwich notch in late summer:

"For weeks the clouds had raked the hills
And vexed the vales with raining,
And all the woods were sad with mist,
And all the brooks complaining.
. . . . . .
At last, a sudden night-storm tore
The mountain veils asunder,
And swept the valleys clean before
The besom of the thunder.

It was as if the summer's late
Atoning for its sadness
Had borrowed every season's charm
To end its days in gladness." [1]

There are many passages in which the poet describes the farms, orchards, streams, gardens and folk, as he and a friend drove up the mountain side one late summer evening. As the travellers reach a well-kept farm house, the farmer calls to his competent wife. She, as all of Whittier's women, is pretty and well poised.

"Her air, her smile, her motions, told
Of womanly completness;
A music as of household songs
Was in her voice of sweetness." [2]

This pretty wife showed the visitors her freshly churned butter and other

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[1] John G. Whittier -- Among the Hills, stanza 1,7-8
[2] Ibid, stanza 21

household prizes. As the visitors journey down the mountain toward their home, the woman companion tells the story of how so rustic and honest a farmer won so fair and intelligent a wife:

"From school and ball and rout she came,
The city's fair, pale daughter,
To drink the wine of mountain air
Beside the Bearcamp Water."

The story tells how her health improved after coming to that region, and how she fell in love with the sturdy farmer. The farmer did not believe her when she first told him of her love, so he answered thus:

"'The plaything of your summer sport,
The spells you weave around me
You cannot at your will undo,
Nor leave me as you found me.
'You go as lightly as you came,
Your life is well without me;
What care you that these hills will close
Like prison-walls about me?'" [1]

This thrust from the farmer brings another declaration of love from the girl and the farmer accepts her proffered love. Their life is a happy one as she is able to make up in technical training that which he lacks; the farmer in turn is able to supply the wisdom which the woods teaches:

"A larger life and wiser aims
The farmer is her debtor;

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[1] John G. Whittier -- Among the Hills, stanza 44

Who holds to his another's heart

Must needs be worse or better.

Through her his civic service shows

A purer-toned ambition;

No double consciousness divides

The man and politician." [1]

Strange it seems to us that Whittier should see such benefits in marriage, yet he never married. He ends his poem in musing on the benefits of marriages of this type; parting lines are:

"And, musing on the tale I heard,

'Twere well, thought I, if often

To rugged farm-life came the gift

To harmonize and soften;--

If more and more we found the troth

Of fact and fancy plighted,

And culture's charm and labor's strength

In rural homes united,--

The simple life, the homely hearth,

With beauty's sphere surrounding

And blessing toil where toil abounds

With graces more abounding." [2]

Whittier had not outgrown the moral tag or, as this shows, word of advice at the end. He also harks back to his love affair with Mary Emerson Smith which

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[1] John G. Whittier -- Among the Hills, stanza 62
[2] Ibid, stanza 86

was not successful because of his rustic manners and poverty. The volume "Among the Hills" was hailed a triumph for the aging poet.

The author has made no mention of Whittier's prose; this was due to the fact that his essays all dealt with themes on the abolition of slavery, persecution of early Quakers, or of character sketches of early patriots, and when the era of moral reform in which they were written passed away, the interest in his prose passed, also. His "Margaret Smith Journal" stands out in spite of its quaint style, because it is full of the folklore of colonial life, Indians, Quakers and Puritans. No further information on his prose will be given here because its influence did not extend beyond the limited reform period.

Whittier's influence on American literature was far reaching, notwithstanding the fact that his great faults were the misuse of rhymes, the ever-present moral tag, and the monotonous, limited meter. Not all of his stanzas were faulty; there are many instances of metrical perfection that compare excellently with that of the best English poets. An example of a stanza of great beauty and perfection, written in his decline, is found in "Sunset on the Bearcamp:"

"Touched by a light that hath no name,
A glory never sung,
Aloft on sky and mountain wall
Are God's great pictures hung.
How changed the summits vast and old !
No longer granite-browed,
They melt in rosy mist; the rock

Is softer than the cloud;

The valley holds its breath; no leaf

Of all its elms is twirled:

The silence of eternity

Seems falling on the world." [1]

Whittier was a gifted story teller and therein lay his power to overshadow the technical faults of his verse. His ballads and rhymed legends made a definite contribution to literature in that they pointed the way to the wealth of material in New England folklore as the basis of regional literature. Later, and extending to the present, writers have gone into different regions of the South and West to collect the folk literature of the mountaineer, the Indian, the cowboy and the lumberjack--all carrying out the idea of regionalism created by Whittier.

This poet's love for humanity caused him to use his pen in defense of the slave, oppressed womankind, and in praise of honest labor. In his pictures of lowly American industrial workers, he was a forerunner of Walt Whitman, whose theme song became that of humble occupation. Although Whittier was not given a secure place in the literary world by critics until 1844 when his "Lays of My Home" was published, he had won a place in the hearts of the American public north of Baltimore by his anti-slavery poems. Whittier was the prophet; preaching the brotherhood of man and universal freedom.

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[1] John G. Whittier -- Sunset on the Bearcamp, stanza 2

THE POET OF UNCONVENTIONALITY

Chapter VII

WALT WHITMAN:

Before John Greenleaf Whittier's light as a luminary in the world of American poetry had been dimmed by time and changing standards, there appeared another Quaker poet whose work was destined to influence literature. This new poet, Walt Whitman, was totally different from Whittier in his approach to the doctrine of the importance of the individual. It is interesting to note that both Whittier and Whitman had had some experience in journalism before turning to literature--their chosen careers.

Walt Whitman was born at West Hills, Long Island in 1819 of Quaker-Dutch and Puritan ancestry. His father was a well-to-do farmer who was also a successful contracting carpenter. The larger financial returns from building caused the elder Whitman to move to Brooklyn, New York when Walt was four years old. During Walt's childhood the family continued to spend considerable time in the more rural environment of West Hills. The nine children of the family lived plainly with few books, many outdoor hours, and long days of lonely farm work. It was here that Walt learned to love the sea that boomed upon the beach, and the vastness of nature impressed itself upon his soul.

For a few years the boy was a pupil in a Brooklyn public school, but at the age of eleven he put aside his textbooks to begin work as an office boy. Two years later he became a printer's apprentice; in the course of two years he learned his trade as compositor, and thus equipped to earn a livelihood, he was free to wander from town to town, always reasonably certain that he could earn a living.

Two of Whitman's deepest yearnings were satisfied in his vocation. The nature of his work and the freedom of his leisure time provided opportunity to feed his insatiable desire for reading. Throughout life he read omnivorously, and his natural taste in reading directed him to the works of Shakespeare and the ancient Greeks. Further, his craving for comradeship with average men, "strong uneducated men" as he called them, fed upon the nondescript friends in the trade. The satisfying of these two needs was to be tremendously important when his talent later matured, for one made possible his keen sympathetic understanding of the democracy of which he sang, and the other gave to him his appreciation of the right word, the beautiful phrase.

Cities teeming with varied human life, fascinated him. His life in New York City where he was a typesetter at first and later a newspaper reporter, afforded him the opportunity to revel in the companionship of men. As city reporter for The Daily Aurora he promenaded lower Broadway, the theatre district, and social gatherings. He rode often on the ferry boats, for he found that in the repose of the river crossing he came to know men. The drivers of omnibuses were especially fascinating to him. During this period of drinking in the companionship of all types of men he was also writing some prose and verse, but his compositions were conventional, journalistic, and insignificant, giving no promise of the future.

At the age of twenty-seven he became editor of the Brooklyn Eagle, but his outspoken support of the cause of the Free Soil Party brought his dismissal. A stranger offered him a job with the Crescent, a New Orleans daily; he accepted the offer, and for two years he remained in the South where he broadened his outlook and reveled in new companions, particularly women.

Upon his return to Brooklyn in 1851, he engaged with his father in the building trade, but the regularity of this work was too much for his restless soul and he gave up that work for journalism.

FIRST CONTRIBUTION:

About this time, Whitman conceived the plan for his book; it came to him like a revelation, and immediately he proceeded to develop the idea. In 1855 he printed the first edition of "Leaves of Grass." This was the most astounding book of poetry to appear in America up to that time. It was a slender volume of ninety-five poorly printed pages; Whitman had set most of the type himself, and instead of the signature of the author, there appeared his portrait.

Of the 1,000 copies printed, many were sent to newspapers and prominent men for review and comment; others were placed in bookstores, but not a one was sold. The reviewers were almost unanimous in condemnation and ridicule. It is interesting to note that collectors fifty years later valued a copy of the book at $500. Emerson, to whom the poet sent a copy, recognized the worth of the poet and sent a warmly congratulatory letter to Whitman. This was just what Whitman needed to boost his spirits after the rebuffs from the critics; he published the letter in the second edition of "Leaves of Grass" which he published in 1856. Whitman was determined to have the public approve of his volume, so he set about to acquaint the public with the merits of the author of "Leaves of Grass." Through a series of anonymous articles printed in the Brooklyn Times (Sept. 29, 1855) he made such announcements as:

> "Very devilish to some, and very divine to some, will appear the poet of these new poems, these

> Leaves of Grass: an attempt, as they are, of a naïve, masculine, affectionate, comtemplative, sensual, impreious person to cast into literature not only his own grit and arrogance, but his own flesh and form, undraped, regardless of models, regardless of modesty or law." [1]

Such articles did force attention from the public but not approval. Whitman was not daunted by rebuffs; in spite of Emerson's earnest protests against reprinting some of the poems that had turned the sympathy of readers of the second edition from the author, Whitman insisted that they were a part of the unity of his work. The 1860 edition was successful; between 5,000 and 6,000 copies were sold before conditions forced the publisher into bankruptcy. Success of this volume was due to the publisher, to the curiosity of the public caused by the anonymously curious newspaper articles, to the striking oddity of the verse form, and to the inclusiveness of the subject-matter.

The advent of the Civil War brought the controversy over the merits of "Leaves of Grass" to a negligible issue. Whitman did not join the Union forces, but upon learning that his brother, a Union officer, was lying wounded in Fredericksburg, Maryland, he hastened there to nurse him. He gave himsent without restraint to the service of the maimed soldiers of both armies. There being no organization such as the Y.M.C.A., the Knights of Columbus or the Salvation Army, Whitman performed the type of work that they assumed in later conflicts. Meanwhile, he supported himself by doing copying and by acting as correspondent for newspapers. From the profoundly touching exper-

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[1] Louis Untermeyer -- Modern American Poetry, p. 33

iences of his duties he received inspiration for his war poems, "Drum Taps." Like Whittier, Whitman was strongly opposed to slavery, but unlike Whittier he never wrote a word of enmity or vindictiveness in his war poems.

In 1864 he was incapacitated by an infection which he received while dressing a gangrenous wound. He received a clerkship; in which position he served until he suffered a paralytic stroke in 1873. Soon after this stroke he moved to Camden, New Jersey where his brother Colonel George Whitman was living. The remainder of his life he spent in Camden, often in extreme poverty, supported uncertainly by the small earnings of his pen and gifts that came from admirers at home and abroad. His brother, George, offered him a home in the new home he had just completed, but Walt preferred to live alone. Within a limited group his fame steadily grew, and toward the end he ruled an inner circle whose faith in him grew. One young Jewish Quaker, Horace Traubee, became so devoted that his loyalty reminds one of the discipleship of Boswell under Doctor Johnson. An attack of pneumonia which brought on other complications led to his death which occured in 1892 on the 26th of March. This year, 1892, was notable because the two leading Quaker poets, Whittier and Whitman, men whose striking personalities and impressionable works left indelible trends on American literature, died.

ORIGINALITY IN STYLE:

To those who knew Whitman and worshipped him, the man was greater than his work. Though at first his egotism might antagonize and his poses might repel, the rugged democracy, the unlimited capacity for wonder, the deep, sincere, universal sympathy of the man at last won over all. He was a man for comradeship; he associated with all sorts of persons and he loved them

all. His chief interest was in the individual; he knew common men beneath their rough exteriors, and he found in them something not to comdemn but to deify. Whitman approached the phenomena of life as if they were being seen for the first time, and he imparted to others the ecstasy of his experience. In his näive appreciation he made no distinctions hence he often sings of subjects that are usually taboo. In his occasional coarseness there is nothing vicious. Walt Whitman's great, universal sympathy was not lip-service, but a power to identify himself with all living things and with inanimate objects. In childhood the sea was his playmate; in maturity, he returned to commune with it; some of its vastness became a part of his soul.

As a poet he first impresses one by his originality and his unconventionality. This originality in verse form was shocking to the American public which had been schooled in the conventional rhymed lines of Longfellow, Lowell, Holmes, Emerson, and which had lately raised Whittier (with his narrow four lined ballad verse) to the ranking American poet. The first poem in "Leaves of Grass" shows his conscious effort to discard the traditions of poetry both as to form and as to subject. He becomes definitely associated with the inarticulate masses, and serves, he says, as their spokesman. "One's-self I Sing" opened the eyes of the world when it proclaimed:

"One's-self I sing, a simple separate person,
Yet utter the word Democratic, the
word En-Masse.

Of physiology from top to toe I
sing,
Not physiognomy alone nor brain

alone is worthy for the Muse--I
say the Form complete is worthier
far
The Female equally with the
Male I sing.

Of Life immense in passion, pulse,
and power,
Cheerful, for freest action form'd under
the laws divine,
The Modern Man I sing." [1]

One sees at once that he cast off all traditional regularities of meter and rhyme; his rhythm cannot be tapped out with the finger-tips, yet there is a rhythm which becomes apparent after reading them aloud.

The love for the complete individual was not his only purpose; Whitman believed in a strong comradeship between men and women, and people of different classes; through this comradeship he believed that the evils of class distinction would be eliminated. So he sings in, "For You O Democracy" of a great comradeship:

"Come, I will make the continent in-
dissoluble,
I will make the most splendid race the
sun ever shone upon,
I will make divine magnetic lands
With the love of comrades,

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[1] Walt Whitman -- "One's-self I Sing

With the life-long love of comrades.

I will plant companionship thick as
trees along all the rivers of
America, and along the shores
of the great lakes, and all over
the prairies,
I will make inseparable cities with
their arms about each other's
necks,
By the love of comrades.

For you these from me, O Democracy,
to serve you ma femme!
For you, for you I am trilling these
songs." [1]

The use of foreign words and phrases was another trick employed by Whitman in his effort to avoid the traditional, hence in stanza three he uses "ma femme" as a tricky way of addressing Democracy.

In the period just following the Civil War, American life was chaotic, and so was American literature. Writers sought refuge from the insecure times by turning to ancient Greek or Roman themes; Whittier turned to New England legends. Whitman's creed called for an elimination of ancient themes. His poem, "The Muse in The New World" tells his exact feeling in this matter:

"Come, Muse, migrate from Greece and Ionia,

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[1] Walt Whitman-- For You O Democracy

Cross out please those immensely overpaid accounts
That matter of Troy and Achilles' wrath,
and Aeneas', Odysseus' wanderings,
Placard "Removed" and "To Let" on the rocks
of your snowy Parnassus,
Repeat at Jerusalem, place the notice
high on Jaffa's gate and on Mount Moriah,
The same on the walls of your German,
French, and Spanish castles, and Italian
Collections,
For know a better, fresher, busier sphere,
a wide, untried domain awaits, demands
you."

Then without warning, the poet turns in the second stanza to references to the appearance of a muse who seems happy to come to America; she ends her journey in the kitchen. The second stanza in part is given:

"I say I see, my friends, if you do not,
the illustrious emigré, (having it is true in her day,
although the same, changed, journeyed considerable)
Making directly for this rendevous, vigorously
Clearing a path for herself, striding through the confusion,
By thud of machinery and shrill steam-whistle undismay'd,
Bluffed not a bit by drain-pipe, gasmeters, artificial fertilizers;
Smiling and pleas'd with palpable intent to stay,
She's here, install'd amid the kitchen-ware!"

His is the plea to write about things American.

Whitman's love for labor and the zest with which it crowned American life are told in his songs of labor. One short but typical labor song is here given:

"I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear,
Those of mechanics, each one singing his
as it should be blithe and strong,
The carpenter singing his as he
measures his plank or beam,
The mason singing his as he makes
for work, or leaves off work,
The boatman singing what belongs to
him in his boat, the deckhand singing
on the steamboat deck,
The shoemaker singing as he sits on
his bench, the hatter singing as he
stands.
The wood-cutter's song, the plough
boy's on his way in the morning, or
at noon intermission or at sundown,
The delicious singing of the mother,
or of the young wife at work, of of
the girl sewing or washing
Each singing what belongs to him
or her or to none else,

The day what belongs to the day--
at night the party of young fellows,
robust, friendly,
Singing with open mouths their
strong melodious songs." [1]

In this piece Whitman expresses his love for these homely and native scenes.

His experiences during the Civil War led to some expressive and dramatic war poems. "Beat! Beat! Drums!" has the added suggestion of the roll of drums when the poem is read aloud, to its suggestion of the horrors of war when no one is left to lead a normal life. In the opening stanza the imperious rattle of drums sets the pace of the poem.

"Beat! Beat! Drums!--blow! bugles!
blow!
Through the windows--through doors--
burst like a ruthless force,
Into the solemn church, and scatter
the congregation,
Into the school where the scholar is
studying."

. . . . . .

The end of the poem continues the martial air:

"Beat! beat! drums--blow! bugles!
blow!
Make no parley--stop for no expostulation,

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[1] Walt Whitman --<u>I Hear America Singing</u>

Mind not the timid--mind not the
weeper or prayer,
Mind not the old man beseeching the
young man,
Let not the child's voice be heard, nor
the mother's entreaties,
Make even the trestles to shake the
dead where they be awaiting the
hearses,
So strong you thrump O terrible
drums--so loud you bugles blow." [1]

The urge to follow the drums fairly shouts at us.

From the excerpts given here one would think that Whitman was incapable of writing beautiful poetry in the traditional form, had he not once agreed to abide by the rules, and had he not then produced a poetic gem. When the news of Lincoln's assassination shocked the world, Whitman wrote two poems on the sad occasion, one in free verse "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed" which was hailed as one of the great elegies of American literature; the other is that unforgettable cry of anguish, "O Captain! My Captain!" Had Whitman written no other poems save these, his name would have been classed with the first poets of America. In the last named poem the symbolism, the rhythm and the rhyme blend perfectly in the creation of such fine stanzas as:

"My Captain does not answer, his lips
are pale and still,

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[1] Walt Whitman -- Beat! Beat! Drums!

My father does not feel my arm he
has no pulse nor will,
The ship is anchor'd safe and sound,
its voyage closed and done,
From fearful trip the victor ship
comes in with object won;
Exult O shores, and sing O bells!
But I with mournful tread,
Walk the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead." [1]

Walt Whitman's influence on the verse form in American literature was powerful. One can scarcely pick up a current magazine or newspaper where verse is printed without finding the mark of Whitman's influence on the stanzas. Not only in the broader outlines of his verse, but in detail, he departed from tradition. Consciously, even laboriously, he discarded the favorite tricks of poetry. He was determined that they should be left out of "Leaves of Grass" and he succeeded. In figurative language, in allusions, in unusual words, he broke with tradition.

CRITICAL OPINIONS:

Since democracy scorns ornate decoration, and since democracy speaks in the plain vocabulary of the common man, its poetry was to do likewise. But this did not mean that his poetry was to be without imagination and rhythm; as one of his interpreters has said, it is upon the imaginative power of his phrasing and his rhythm that his claim to recognition as a poet ranks. Two

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[1] Walt Whitman -- O Captain! My Captain!, stanza 3

outstanding critical quotations of his work help to evaluate his poetry in the light of its permanency, Americanism, and worth. The first comes from Carleton Noyes' "An Approach to Walt Whitman:"

> "Whitman's poetry is like the sea. It has the same unbridled swing, the same variety and unity-in-variety; it is spacious and composite; it had the sea's movement and stir, its immediacy and its suggestion of infinity beyond. We plunge into it, to encounter a shock; the first recoil is followed by a sense of exhilaration and of escape out of cramping manners and dress into the nakedness of a wider, bigger element."

The second quotation comes from Curtis H. Page in "The Chief American Poets." He says of Whitman:

> "He has expressed not only some material aspects, but also some essential ideals of America, as no other poet has: among them, our sense of freedom and independence, our conception of real democratic equality, our intense individualism yet sense of union one with another in a great whole."

The more one reads of Whitman and assimulates his ideas of democracy, the more one comes to know and appreciate his true value as a poet.

CONCLUSION

The first Quakers to arrive in America were severely persecuted on the sole ground that they did not embrace the Puritan faith. Quaker tenacity compelled them to continue their efforts of homemaking in the new land. As a result it was not long before Quakers had planted a colony entirely under the direction of exponents of their own faith; and in addition to this they had attained security, prestige, and influence in all of the other colonies. They were peaceful citizens, yet they were aggressive in matters supporting social and political welfare. Quakerism, which expounds the doctrine of freedom for all men, simplicity, honesty and piety in daily life, freedom from pomp and form in religion, the revelation of God from within one's soul rather than from without, the value of work and the necessity for peace, exerted a positive and worthwhile influence on American life and letters.

In the matter of social reforms Quakers took the lead in working out ways and means of living peacefully with the Indians. They dealt honestly with the Indians in all financial transactions; they sought to give the Indians the values of Christian living.

Quakers were leaders in the great anti-slavery agitation. They based their active fight against slavery on the principle that all men should be free. It was not the Quakers' idea to split the country by war in order to secure freedom for Negroes; they tried the methods of manumission and purchase until pro-slavery advocates caused them to resort to participation in the Underground Railroad. Many young Quakers bore arms in the Civil War in the cause of Negro freedom, although war was against the tenets of their sect.

In another great social reform movement, The Women's Rights Agitation, Quakers proved capable of leadership because of the emphasis which they placed on participation of women in all walks of life. Lucretia Mott waged a successful campaign in behalf of freedom for women. The foregoing activities were exclusively social, yet their influence on literature is noted down to the present.

The Quakers did a creditable piece of work in turning the attention of America to the richness, freshness, and beauty of native characters, settings, and atmosphere. They discovered romance as thrilling in the Indian and the New England whaler as that found in stories of the old world. There was a note of propaganda in behalf of freedom in the Quaker pamphlets, essays, and newspapers from the time of John Woolman down to the Civil War. Even after this period Quaker journalists urged Americans to follow a sane course toward peace.

Herman Melville's soarings into the mysteries of the metaphysical for spiritual guidance, together with his exotic South Sea Island backgrounds, brought a fresh strain to American literature. This feature helped greatly to pave the way for the Transcendental Movement in literature and made it easier for "plain living and high thinking" to bear such fruits as a more practical life, and a more liberal religion for extremely conservative New England. Quakerism had a direct effect on American ideology in that it influenced the trend of thought to a consciousness of the value of the present and of the future rather than a harking back to Old World, form-bound traditions.

Whittier's propaganda poems served to create public opinion against the

evils of slavery. After the cuase of the Union had been won, his legendary poems of New England and his ballads of simple life set a standard for literature that embraced a calm, picturesque simplicity of life far removed from strife.

John G. Whittier's early efforts in collecting legends of his native New England gave birth to the movement of regionalism in American literature; this regionalism became a permanent feature of American literature.

Walt Whitman, of the unconventional style, discarded practically of the accepted traditions of versification and subject-matter. In breaking with the conventional in poetry, he paved the way for other writers to individualize their style. Although he is still a paradox to many, the obvious truth is that his all-embracing democracy and freedom have made a permanent contribution in the form of an escape from the narrowness of previous writers.

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